

THE PRAXIS OF POSTCOLONIAL INTERCULTURAL THEATRE
IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history theatrical performance has been used both as a disseminator of dominant ideology and as a place for revolt. This study will investigate how theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand may play a role in the decolonization of postcolonial peoples.

At the core of the dissertation is an engagement with theories of postcolonial and intercultural performance which are tested in a theatre laboratory experiment to see how these theories translate in practical terms to the stage. The work will investigate, through a semiotic analysis, what occurs in the process of rehearsal and direction in transforming the meanings of a text to the stage. The text used for the theatre laboratory experiment is Mervyn Thompson's *Songs to the Judges*. One aim of the production will be to juxtapose Māori and Pākehā performance forms in a syncretic theatre performance. During the process I will focus on questions such as, "on what terms can a Pākehā woman direct a play with a bicultural cast?" and "what are the (im)possibilities of an equal exchange of knowledge/experience between the Māori and Pākehā participants?" Whilst the performance highlights polarities of them and us, black and white, the aim of the rehearsal process and group dynamic is to move beyond this polarity operating under the philosophy of Barba's concept of 'Third Theatre',

For members of the third theatre, content and form are often less important than a group's socio-cultural philosophy and how that philosophy is realized in its daily work and reflected in its productions (Watson 1993: 21).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is at the level of interactions that the human dimensions of interculturalism are, at once, most potent and problematic. Tellingly, they are almost never confronted in theatre research, quite unlike the recent trends in anthropology, for instance, where the racist and Eurocentric dimensions in representing other cultures have been extended beyond the writing of ethnography to the actual relationships – personal, social, and professional – that are initiated between anthropologists and their subjects (Bharucha 1993: 84).

When the case was made to the coordinator of the Australasian Drama Studies Association Conference at Waikato University in 1998 that *Songs to the Judges* be considered both as a conference paper and as a performance, it was pointed out that, “my directing of *Songs to the Judges* is motivated by the desire to question how an intercultural performance can be negotiated in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1998. It stages histories that have been marginalised in our national mythologies. The dialectic is between acts of colonisation and acts of protest against that colonisation”. These three sentences usefully and concisely locate the essence of the fields of research for this dissertation: the directing of the play; analysis using postcolonial and intercultural theatre theory; and the underlying hypothesis that a Pākehā¹ woman could direct a bicultural production in Aotearoa²

¹ Pākehā, the Māori word for Caucasian, meaning white skinned.

² Aotearoa is one of the original names given to New Zealand by Māori, meaning ‘the land of the long white cloud’. To acknowledge the biculturalism of the Treaty of Waitangi and my support of Māori language acquisition I use both names to refer to this land.

New Zealand.

The ethical stance in relation to the project was to facilitate an egalitarian relationship between the Māori³ and the Pākehā actors on all levels of the production. However, the question of how to negotiate the power dynamic between director and actor, where in the final instance the director has the power of veto, was one which had to be resolved. As Bharucha argues, “One of the challenges in intercultural experiment is to find a method of work that reflects larger principles of ‘exchange’. In this regard, the dynamics of power embodied in the director/actor relationship pose problems in any tradition” (1990: 6). The power dynamics in a country that has been colonised are especially delicate, and in Aotearoa New Zealand Māori are often wary of their culture being exploited by Pākehā.

In seeking to work in a bicultural exchange, and not appropriate Māori culture in an act of neocolonialism, this study looked to strategies of Kaupapa Māori Research as one of its research methodologies. One of these strategies is to work alongside a cultural advisor, or kaumatua, and a balance and exchange between Māori and Pākehā in the leadership roles for *Songs to the Judges* was facilitated when Rai Rakatau joined the group as kaumatua.

One of the aims for the process of rehearsal and performance was that both cultures could enter into an exchange and learn from each other; more specifically, the Pākehā actors about Māori culture and the Māori actors about the craft of theatre, and this was

³ Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

achieved through the process of the work which developed relationships of trust, honesty and respect for each other over a period of five months. A problem to be confronted in Aotearoa New Zealand is that this is a country that has been colonised and colonisation does not involve an exchange of cultures, but a forcing of one culture onto another in the deprivation of the indigenous people's land, language, and culture. In the rehearsal process emphasis was placed on facilitating an equitable working relationship, and this included group discussion after each rehearsal, "In order to dominate, the dominator has no choice but to deny true praxis to the people, deny them the right to say their own word and think their own thoughts. He cannot act dialogically" (Freire 1972: 97).

The practical aspect of the research was to direct Mervyn Thompson's *Songs to the Judges* which was first produced in 1980. Thompson was an Aotearoa New Zealand playwright and *Songs to the Judges* is an historical play about land issues between Māori and Pākehā from the high period of British imperialism in the 1800s to 1980. In relation to the land, Fanon argues that, "For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity" (1963: 44).

Formally, the use of songs can be seen as a liminal position between enacting and telling. The songs often swing from humour to anger and pain causing the spectator to experience a state of shock. This disjunction between humour and anger sets out to prevent empathy allowing the audience space to critique the performance and question their own values and beliefs. Having a socially critical audience was one of Brecht's

objectives and in his theory of Epic Theatre he outlines methods to create alienation effects. Brecht was a Marxist and as Eagleton posits, “Marxist criticism analyses literature in terms of the historical conditions which produce it; and it needs, similarly, to be aware of its own historical conditions” (1976: vi). Thompson had a strong commitment to representing the struggles of the working class and the oppressed, and in his oeuvre concentrated on the historical conditions that have formed Aotearoa New Zealand as the base material for his playscripts, hence the utilisation of a materialist methodology in analysis.

This research project is identifiable both as theatre laboratory research in the practical sense, and theoretical analysis, where one engages self-reflexively on the work through theoretical methodologies. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci argued that the intellectual must no longer be merely an orator, but must participate in practical life as an organizer, and persuader. He called on intellectuals to participate in the emancipation of the oppressed in a collaborative situation and do more than theorize about, for instance, decolonisation. Both Thompson and I directed *Songs to the Judges* as intellectuals, engaged in academic pursuits, but also as theatre practitioners who wanted to reach out to the community, and both productions were presented in times of political unrest.

Thompson states in his autobiography,

I will go on fighting for what I believe. A healthy theatre is one, which, while never losing its concern with standards, is vitally connected to its community. The bloodstream is common. The life of the community flows into that of the theatre, because the theatre workers are open to it and feel it to be important. The life of the theatre flows into that of the community, helping to increase its awareness of itself and even to clarify its laws and customs (1980: 162).

One underpinning objective in the creation of the performance was to juxtapose Western and Māori performance forms without fusion. This meant, in real terms, that Pākehā actors were not asked to learn Māori performing arts, but was not as clearcut for the Māori actors as they were engaged under the umbrella of a Western theatrical form based on the playscript. However, this discrepancy was undercut by the politics of performing on a marae⁴, with the formal rituals of encounter of the space. This too, of course, relates to how biculturalism is defined and the idea that Māori are by necessity bicultural⁵ whereas Pākehā are predominantly not bicultural⁶.

One of the obvious models in juxtaposing different performance forms was Barba's intercultural performances, particularly at the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), where he directs performers from India, Bali, Japan, South America and Europe retaining their specific performance forms. Immediately after the final performance of *Songs to the Judges* I travelled to Odin Teatret in Holstebro, Denmark to observe Barba directing the rehearsals of *Teatrum Mundi*, the intercultural performance being prepared for ISTA in Portugal in 1998, which I attended.

In the direction of *Songs to the Judges*, I foregrounded the binary opposition between black and white as a means to challenge and expose the ways in which difference has been constructed between Māori and Pākehā, and how it continues to operate, as a

⁴ The central area of a Māori village, its buildings and courtyard.

⁵ Having been forcibly colonised by European culture.

⁶ Here defined as being able to move with ease between two cultures speaking the languages and with knowledge of the social protocols.

mechanism of oppression and stereotyping. The research also explores the relationships between the actors and how they encountered the dynamics of racial interaction on personal and professional levels in the whānau⁷, investigating bodies on stage, bodies working and training together. The focus of the research is the investigation of this bicultural relationship in the process of the work, as much as in the finished product which entails a detailed semiotic reading of the performance. This weighting of the practical research feeding the theoretical aligns itself with Marxist theory where as Freire posits, “men’s activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it. Men’s activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action” (1972: 96).

There is a praxis of theatre that has an emphasis on relationships, the ‘third theatre’ as practised and theorised by Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret, where,

The sociological dimension of theatre is more important than aesthetics in the third theatre. Unlike either institutional theatre or the avant-garde, in which the emphasis is on producing, reflecting, and/or distributing culture, the focus in third theatre is on relationships: on the relationships between those in a particular group, on their relationship to other groups, and on their relationship with the audience. This focus on the network of relationships in third theatre has its foundation in the individual and his/her role in the collective (Watson 1993: 20-21).

This definition of ‘third theatre’ is useful in aligning the present research project within a theatre tradition, as it does not fall easily into mainstream theatre which employs professional actors who work to a commercial agenda in large traditional theatre spaces. The emphasis on the socio-cultural relationships of the group and daily work over time is

⁷ Family or group working together, here referring to the ensemble of the actors.

something I have aspired to for many years, my first influence being Grotowski and his Laboratory Theatre. This philosophy of work also aligns with that of other bicultural theatre groups who have been working in Aotearoa New Zealand, including Paul Maunder and *The Theatre of the Eighth Day* in the 1980s, and in a contemporary context, Jim Moriarty and *Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu*, whose work in Marae Theatre and prisons will be discussed in Chapter V.

The practical research involved negotiation and collaboration with the tangata whenua (indigenous people) in directing a bicultural production at *Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae* in Otautahi (Christchurch), followed by performances at the Australasian Drama Studies Association (ADSA) Conference in Hamilton, and at Parihaka. *Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae* was a location that opened the performance to an international audience, as the marae has a strong tourist performing arts tradition as part of its economic base, as did the ADSA Conference with members attending from many countries. The Parihaka performance, on the other hand, was limited to the people of Parihaka, where the purpose of the performance was in commemoration of the centenary of the last prisoners' return from imprisonment in Otago on the 12 July 1898⁸. The marae performances also encouraged a first time theatre audience, in particular for Māori who would not normally attend the theatre but came to a performance on the marae.

With the increasing globalisation of culture, issues of colonisation and imperialism are central in the creation and analysis of performance and of how marginalised people are

⁸ Māori who had been arrested and held for up to two years without trial for engaging in passive resistance to the taking or selling of their land.

represented on the stage. Since the 1970s, there has been an increase in the publishing of postcolonial writers and in Aotearoa New Zealand it is Māori writers who are an important part of that growth with plays that are predominantly written in English. *Songs to the Judges* is a bicultural text⁹ and as such raises specific queries: Is bicultural performance a disguise for a kind of 'Orientalism' or can it empower a community? To whom do cultures belong? Who has the right to represent them? Who is in a position to judge the effects of that representation? How might one establish an egalitarian production process? What happens in the process of page to stage? How does the dominant culture via its established theatres engage with postcolonial plays, which by definition seek to decolonize the stage and hence might be considered anti-establishment? Can theatre influence change in society? Is a postcolonial theatre identifiable in Aotearoa New Zealand? In focusing on these questions the interconnectedness between postcolonial theory, writing and performance will be questioned.

The work of the director in theatre could be aligned with that of being 'hybrid'. As director, one is inside the work with a creative vision for the performance, but must also be able to stand outside the work 'as the eye of the spectator' to gain objectivity. This means that a director works in theatre as both an insider and outsider. In this project, the role of the outsider takes on another aspect where I critique the work of the insider, becoming what might be termed 'ethnographer'. In this respect, I have endeavoured to be self-reflexive, interrogating my own position within the work asking, who am I? Another

⁹ Written by a Pākehā male.

hybrid? I stand outside as an academic and inside as an artist. I want to see it, and I want to do it.

That I analyse my own performance is open to critique, however in *to all appearances* Blau addresses just this issue defending his own position¹⁰,

I started out by focusing questions of ideology and performance around my own experience with actors. There was in that, as in all the theory derived from my work in the theatre, the liability of claiming a phenomenological advantage in Whitmanian terms: I was there, I saw it, I did it ... This subjectivist impulse of 'concrete experience' has been suspect or repudiated from structuralism on, leading eventually to Althusser's own conception of history without a subject. In recent years, however, this anonymous history has also been questioned, as we've become more aware of the geopolitical diaspora of 'subject-effects' and the emergence of 'authentic' subjects who, rather than being interpellated, want to define their own 'positions' while constructing their own histories (Blau 1992: 21).

In Chapter II the main theoretical methodologies utilised in the research of the project are introduced. To explain why these particular methodologies are utilised I tell the story of my journey between Māori and Pākehā cultures and why I decided to research and direct Thompson's bicultural songplay. The theories are themselves outlined, including postcolonial theory, Kaupapa Māori Research, insider/outsider research, Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia, and Theatre Anthropology.

Chapter III engages with definitions of biculturalism and places my dissertation within the context of the Treaty of Waitangi, as the bicultural founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. I begin with the Treaty of Waitangi because this Treaty represents a partnership between Māori and Pākehā and is the founding document of

¹⁰ It is the position from which Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Brecht, Grotowski and Barba wrote their theories, from their own practice, and it is the method of the scientist who writes up his/her own experiments. This research in theatre is often known as a theatre laboratory.

biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand; this Treaty is alive and recognised in Aotearoa New Zealand when many treaties in other countries have long since been buried. The fact that it is alive, must by necessity mean that I engage with it as a New Zealander endeavouring to live in a country struggling to realise biculturalism. I begin with the Treaty of Waitangi because the dissertation engages with postcolonial theory and because I directed Thompson's *Songs to the Judges*, a bicultural production, which focuses on events of Māori protest over 140 years in relation to the land. The history of the Treaty is outlined to place the dissertation within the context of the politics of Aotearoa New Zealand. Of particular note are the different reading strategies the Treaty has been subjected to over time, from a colonial to a postcolonial period, and how these relate to bicultural theatre. The comparison of the Treaty and bicultural theatre is represented through a visual weaving of the two together, in an historical juxtaposition of Acts of parliament in relation to the Treaty and the development of bicultural theatre.

These two chapters establish the parameters within which the following chapters function. Throughout, there is an interweaving of practical research and theoretical reflection.

Chapter IV focuses on Mervyn Thompson: his personal history and the influences on his work; the development of the songplay; an analysis of the text of *Songs to the Judges*; Thompson's and my own productions are placed within an historical context in Aotearoa New Zealand; and a comparison is made between the two productions.

Chapter V locates the performance under the category of environmental theatre, outlining Schechner's theory and placing marae and prison theatre, both influenced by Jim Moriarty in Aotearoa New Zealand, within these boundaries. Definitions of Māori hui (meeting, gathering), and the rituals of encounter, are detailed and the relationship between ritual and performance in marae theatre expanded. Always in mind is the question, 'where does the bicultural meet?' How is there a connection between Māori and Pākehā through the production?

Songs to the Judges is a 'songplay' and Chapter VI focuses on the music and songs and investigates the influences on Thompson of Gilbert and Sullivan, music hall and blackface minstrelsy. The chapter investigates the different ideologies, or worldviews, as expressed through the European and Māori musical forms, including discussion of the plan to include Māori traditional instruments in the 1998 music score. Bakhtin and the carnivalesque are introduced in relation to the parodic qualities of the Gilbert and Sullivan form. Bakhtin's writings both on carnival and heteroglossia support the argument that *Songs to the Judges* can be classified as a tool of decolonization and an analysis of the playscript is made utilising his theory of language to support this claim. "A central feature of this theory is the sustained consideration given to the social diversity of speech types, a phenomenon of all actual language activity to which Bakhtin assigns a term translatable as 'heteroglossia'" (Bristol 1985: 20).

After submitting the proposal and doctoral title for the present dissertation, and upon further research, I realised that the linking of the terms postcolonial and intercultural

in the one title could be seen to be mutually exclusive. Rather than change the title, there is a case for pursuing and interrogating this relationship in terms of globalization and indigenization, which is explored in this chapter.

Chapter VII details the rehearsal process through notes from my Rehearsal Log, and includes an analysis of the actor training method which was influenced by Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. From a rehearsal perspective, I asked myself, "what are the differences that the Māori and Pākehā actors experience in the reading and performing of the text? What strategies need to be in place for these differences to be aired? How does the director navigate these seas to facilitate input from Māori and Pākehā actors, to channel the intense emotions, anger and conflicts away from individual or personal conflicts into the performance?"

A semiotic reading of the performance follows in Chapter VIII following the lead of Helen Gilbert who moved postcolonial theory beyond analysis of text into the corporeality of the performance itself. In relation to performance, the content can be undercut by the form, that is, by the representation of bodies on the stage. It is important to analyse what happens in the process of direction. How is content put into action? How do written texts and performance texts relate to each other? Written texts may document or prescribe performances, but the body can be subversive. Whilst the media can monopolize and reinforce cultural hegemonies to shape global taste, the theatre has been an instrument of power as a tool in the history of subordination and resistance of cultural appropriation and reappropriation.

Chapter IX introduces intercultural theatre practitioners, to locate the bicultural experiment in an international context. From my attendance at ISTA in 1998 and 2000 I am able to further analyse my work, in hindsight, and utilising Theatre Anthropology I attempt an analysis of Māori performing arts, through the haka (fierce rhythmical dance), in relation to Barba's Theatre Anthropology. Barba argues that,

Performance study nearly always tends to prioritise theories and utopian ideas, neglecting an empirical approach. Theatre Anthropology directs its attention to empirical territory in order to trace a path among various specialized disciplines, techniques and aesthetics that deal with performing. It does not attempt to blend, accumulate or catalogue the performer's techniques. It seeks the elementary: *the technique of techniques*. On the one hand this is a utopia. On the other, it is another way of saying, with different words, *learning to learn* (Barba 1995: 10).

Chapter X attempts a conclusion bringing the heteroglot back to the containable, rethinking issues of identity, globalization and indigenization and questioning if performance can be an equitable exchange between cultures. I focus on my choice to highlight black and white polarities in the performance through the casting of Māori as Māori and Pākehā as Pākehā, and relate this back to the rehearsal process.

This dissertation began in 1996 with an aim of looking at a range of bicultural and intercultural texts in performance, those written by both Māori and Pākehā. However, as the research progressed and became enmeshed within the one particular production of *Songs to the Judges*, the field of research narrowed into a detailed analysis of this particular production, which then extends to encompass a deeper understanding of the general field. This manner of proceeding has made it possible to dig deeply into the experience of the many relationships involved in a bicultural performance: between

Pākehā and Māori; between the director and the tangata whenua (local people) of the marae; between the director and the actors; between the director and the kaumatua; between the actors themselves throughout the rehearsal process; between the actors and the spectators and between practice and theory. The focus of the dissertation became the relationships between people in negotiating a bicultural territory. Whilst there is much theory ‘about’ this territory it is in the ‘doing’ that these theories are tested and from this maybe altered. The research has involved the doing, the negotiating, the facilitating, and the reflecting on the practice and theory of bicultural theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand. It has involved practical experimental theatre laboratory research and qualitative research, including interviews with people who have knowledge of theatre, of Maori performing arts, and who knew Mervyn Thompson, bringing to the discussion questions and responses from theatre academics, participants as actors, and spectators as witnesses.

The thesis does not endeavour to set out an historical record of bicultural theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand, as for example, has been undertaken by Greenwood¹¹.

Thompson’s play offered the potential for a cultural exchange between the actors because each song is presented alternately from a Māori and Pākehā perspective in a dialectical relationship. However, this theoretical idea was to be tested in practice, in rehearsal and performance. An aim of the performance was to generate a desire in the spectator to want to go out of the performance space and learn more about Aotearoa New Zealand’s history

¹¹ Greenwood, Janinka. *History of Bicultural Theatre: Mapping the terrain*. Christchurch: Christchurch College of Education, 2002.

and cultural relationships, and to open a space for discussion at the end of each performance.

The production was undertaken as an experiment: to question in practice, that is in rehearsal and performance, what I have been asking in theory. Do readings from the page change when transformed by live bodies on stage? Is *Songs to the Judges*, which appears to offer a real possibility of cultural exchange, a text which allows this in practice? Can this work be used as a tool of decolonization or is it a further tool of neocolonialism?

In this production of *Songs to the Judges*, I set out with the utopian ideal of an egalitarian exchange between all the participants across cultures. The play is grounded in the specificity of the history, languages and racial interactions of over one hundred and fifty years from the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. This is bicultural theatre that sets out to tell history from the perspective of the marginalised, in a re-writing of the dominant culture's version of the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand. As Bharucha suggests, "the interpretation and use of cultures have to be confronted within the particularities of a specific historical condition. It is naïve, if not irresponsible, to assume that a meaningful confrontation of any culture can transcend the immediacies of its history" (1990: 1).

The form of the writing of the dissertation is linked to that of its central topic, *Songs to the Judges*, being a collage of materials which includes interview material; the use of English and Māori language; the use of first and third person speech; history; theory and practical methodologies in approaching the research topic from many

perspectives, in an interplay of voices, as Clifford posits, “Ethnography is invaded by heteroglossia” (1988: 51).

In the text I do not italicise Māori words because Māori has been an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand since 1987 and is not deemed foreign. Macrons mark long vowels in Māori and where there is inconsistency in the text, it is from quoted sources which have not used the macron. A glossary of Māori words used is provided following the bibliography.

Since directing the performance in 1998 I have officially changed my name by deed poll from Cherie Hart to Lilicherie McGregor.

Accompanying the dissertation is a DVD documenting the rehearsal process, through a number of specific scenes, from the beginning of the process through to the end¹².

¹² The first scene on the marae ātea was not filmed. Some sections of the recording have problems with the sound quality.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGIES OF ENQUIRY

We have a history of people putting Maori under a microscope in the same way a scientist looks at an insect. The ones doing the looking are giving themselves the power to define (Merata Mita¹ in Smith 1999: 58).

The Praxis of Postcolonial Intercultural Theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand. Each of these terms has a discreet body of knowledge attached to it and in this chapter I provide an overview of the literature for each field to locate my specific practice within a wider discourse. Each of these fields will be drawn on in subsequent chapters in more depth in relation to the text, rehearsals and performance of *Songs to the Judges* and bicultural theatre.

In detailing the methodologies that I employed for both the practical and the theoretical research in investigating the making of a bicultural performance, I first need to explain how I came to this particular field of research. In Eugenio Barba's first chapter of *The Paper Canoe*, entitled 'The Genesis of Theatre Anthropology', he gives an account of his own beginnings and journey in theatre. He asks, "But what is it that *I know*? What would I say if I had to talk about *my* journey ... If memory is knowledge, then I know that my journey has crossed through various cultures" (Barba 1995: 1). Following in the wake of Barba's waka (canoe), the genesis of my dissertation is in the form of a journey, my journey between two cultures navigating their different values, fears, prejudices and

¹ Merita Mita. *Patu* documentary of 1981 Springbok Tour of Aotearoa New Zealand.

generosities. I begin with myself, my journey and its transitions, relationships and transformations.

Beginnings – Te Kore Kore²

The seed of the performance was sown at Parihaka in 1994. It began with the land, the word and the whakapapa (genealogy), beginning with te maunga, te awa, te tangata (the mountain, the river, the people) of Parihaka - historical site of passive resistance in the 1880s led by Te Whiti-o-Rongomai. Parihaka, where the Māori people resisted the British settlers' insistence on purchasing the land. Parihaka, a site of great mana (prestige).

I was attending a hui of *Ngā Puna Waihanga* (Māori Artists and Weavers) as a member of the performance group *Te Rere o te Whetu Whakangahau*, comprised predominantly of Māori 'youth at risk'. I did not know the historical significance of Parihaka, nor why my friend Patricia Wallace, a member of *Ngā Puna Waihanga*, had encouraged me to attend - which was because she believed this experience would be important in my life. It was a large hui with hundreds gathered for workshops, performances and discussion on the West Coast of the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Cold winds blasted down from the mountain, mid-winter, Queen's Birthday holiday weekend, an ironic date to be on this land that resisted the British Crown.

On Sunday morning the manuhiri (visitors) were gathered together in the whare (house) 'Te Niho O Te Ati Awa' and addressed by Te Miringa Hohaia, the kaitiaki

² Nothingness, the place of all potential, endings and beginnings.

(caretaker) of the marae, renowned for his skill in oratory and taiaha³, who narrated the history of Parihaka. I was shaken out of my apathy and ignorance of Māori Land Claims, hearing for the first time in my forty years the history of Parihaka. Next to speak was an old kaumatua (elder) who in tears spoke of the confiscation of Parihaka land and the issuing by government of lease-hold titles to Pākehā for a pittance in rental. He admonished those present to ‘go out and tell others what has happened here and is still happening’. He mused that there might be a future Prime Minister in the room, who could make political change. I thought to myself that whilst I was not a prime minister, I was a theatre director and had the ability to create a performance to tell to a wider audience. The seed was planted - to put into action the words of the kaumatua.

Another reason for wanting to direct *Songs to the Judges* was because I was distressed that the history of Aotearoa New Zealand that had been taught in the school curriculum was the history of the coloniser, with no mention of Parihaka or the colonised (apart from being savages) and felt sure that if I did not know about this history, there were others in ‘God’s own’⁴ who also did not know. The settler makes history, New Zealand did not exist before it was ‘discovered’ by Abel Tasman and mapped by James Cook. The histories taught in schools were written by the victors, about the ‘mother’ country, about British kings and queens and wars. In *Broken Arse*⁵ Tu asks Henry: “By the way, who did your family buy the farm from”, Henry: “No one. I think they were the

³ Māori martial arts.

⁴ ‘God’s own’, a kiwi saying used to describe Aotearoa New Zealand as the best place on earth.

⁵ Stewart, Bruce.

first owners” (Stewart: 1991). The ‘official history’ was documented from the perspective of the dominant culture who brought civilisation and Christianity to the natives, “Not for them the declaration of human rights and the protection of the universal republic: they constitute the Other, the species of exotic native, *le/la sauvage* however noble, their only role that of children waiting to be educated, waiting for the ‘civilising mission’ of the Europeans” (Fischer 1993: 4). I was not the only person at Parihaka that day to go away inspired to make an artistic response with which to disseminate the message, also present was singer/writer Jacqui Keelan Davey (Ngati Porou), who was saddened at her own ignorance of the supposedly notorious Parihaka incident and its import to New Zealand history. With approval from Te Miringa Hohaia she wrote and produced a waiata (song) released on CD entitled *Parihaka*.

This lack of information about Parihaka is corroborated by Riseborough who in *Days of Darkness* presents a detailed breakdown of the texts used in the school curriculum:

A disturbing feature of this neglect is the treatment given to the Parihaka years in history books used in schools. J. C. Beaglehole’s *New Zealand: A Short History*, published in 1936, relegated the ‘provocative Parihaka incident’ to a footnote. J. B. Condliffe and W.T. G. Airey in their *Short History of New Zealand* described Parihaka as a ‘communist village’ where after ‘curious and amusing scenes’, the prophet Te Whiti was arrested and the ‘threatened trouble ended in a burlesque at which the whole colony laughed’. In a later revised edition, the paragraph on Parihaka was omitted altogether ... Dick Scott’s *The Parihaka Story* (1954), the first full-length book on Parihaka, was followed in 1975 by an expanded and illustrated version, *Ask That Mountain* ... Scott’s books have been dismissed as one-sided and unfair to the settlers, but they were, as he himself said, ‘an attempt to redress a hitherto overwhelmingly one-sided record’ ... Harry Dansey, the only Maori so far who has published work on the events at Parihaka, was not a historian

but a journalist and playwright, and New Zealand's first race relations conciliator. Having accepted the responsibility for writing about Parihaka placed upon him by the elders ... His play is the story of Te Ua 'the prophet' and Te Whiti 'the man of peace' ... *Te Raukura* is both a lesson and a warning, for it is the story of those who can forgive and those who can never forget ... Dansey's lesson and warning are to be taken seriously on several levels. It can no longer be considered a legitimate exercise of a European, dependent on European sources, to seek to interpret the Maori world. Maori feeling about such activity is understandably negative and would be well expressed in the words of Keri Kaa: 'waiho ma matou tonu e tuhituhi a matou korero'. ['Leave it to us to write our own narratives.' Keri Kaa 'Review of Michael King's *Maori*', *New Zealand Listener* 24 Sept 1983, pp 98-99] ... (Riseborough 1989: 5-10).

I quote Riseborough at length because she gives a full and detailed account of the (lack) of history texts about Parihaka used in the education system and as a response to refute a critique that it was redundant to direct *Songs to the Judges* because, 'everyone knows the story, it is a cliché'. Riseborough claims that, "The story of the Parihaka years shows that present day Maori claims to land are based on real and lasting grievances; yet the story has been largely consigned to the darkness" (Riseborough 1989: viii). The counter-history, told in *Songs to the Judges*, from the perspective of the marginalised, documents protest and rejection of 'civilisation', "The confiscation of land in the North Island of New Zealand following the wars of the 1860s created a sense of grievance among the local tribes which continues to affect relations between Māori and European to this day" (Riseborough 1989: vii). The above extended quotation also contextualises the political atmosphere in which Thompson was writing as a Pākehā about Māori history, with Māori insisting that they be left to write their own narratives.

My Journey

Back in Otautahi (Christchurch), Te Waipounamu (South Island), I chanced upon a copy of Mervyn Thompson's songplay *Songs to the Judges*, with songs detailing the history of Parihaka. This was the vehicle. The project germinated – I tapped out the melodies of the 19 songs on my piano – one third were about Parihaka while the others charted Māori political protest over 140 years. This songplay is a memory of protest, that won't go away, as Moana and the Moa Hunters⁶ aptly phrase it,

We are Māori and we won't get Justice till we've got a Māori flag ... Won't go away, Treaty won't go away, Treaty written in the sky, Treaty written in the hearts of mankind ... There is a wind, there is a wind of change moving across the land ... it is named Tinorangatiratanga.

My journey to Parihaka tells why I chose to direct Thompson's *Songs to the Judges*, but, there is a pre-history to this bicultural production. In 1993 I directed Euripides' *Electra* and, curious about the interconnections between Māori and Greek mythology, cast two Māori actors and worked with a Māori choreographer. During this rehearsal process I realised that I was ignorant of Māori protocol and that if I was to direct in Aotearoa New Zealand I needed to learn, at least, the fundamentals of Māori protocol and the Māori language. This awakening led me to study te reo Māori and to work with Rawiri Pene as part of the whanau *Te Rere o te Whetu Whakangahau*, directing Riwia Brown's *Ngā Wahine* (The Women) in collaboration with them. In August 1994 the whanau made a hikoi (bus journey) around the North Island performing *Ngā Wahine* at

⁶ Moana and The Moa Hunters, musical group, text from CD.

the home marae of the group members. On the waka (bus) I met kaumatua Rai Rakatau who was to become the Māori advisor for *Songs to the Judges*.

Songs to the Judges is performed history exposing the hypocrisies of the British Crown's 'honouring' of the Treaty of Waitangi that resulted in the "denial of the Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, of the indigenous people" (Fischer 1993: 5) "as Marx said, the words of the slogan *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité!* were replaced by others which translated better their true meaning: Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery!" (Boal 1974: 65). Smith points out that people often believe official history is also about justice,

that understanding history will enlighten our decisions about the future. *Wrong*. History is also about power. In fact history is mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others. It is because of this relationship with power that we have been excluded, marginalized and 'Othered' (1999: 34).

It was the issue of the dynamic of power relationships between the director and the actors that was a fundamental concern in the bicultural production that I was conceptualising. No matter how collaborative the rehearsal process, it is the director who has the power of veto. However, the Māori word kaupapa⁷ was useful for identifying my values and objectives in directing a bicultural performance with the aim of enabling equal participation between Māori and Pākehā in all aspects of the production. This included

⁷ "Maori use the word kaupapa in various ways. It is the term for purpose, agenda, intention, reason. At a deeper level it is the basis, the platform, the standpoint, the assured philosophy ... to be true one must find one's kaupapa. It simplifies. It organises" (Ritchie: 204).

the director's sharing of power and the means to do that was by standing alongside a

kaumatua. In an interview, Howard McNaughton⁸ discusses this issue with Hone Kouka,⁹

HOWARD: The element of collectivised authority – can you give a bit of detail on how you relate to kaumatua when you're developing a story? I know that consultation with elders is very important to you. Is there ever conflict between the authority of the director – which is traditionally a very high authority in European theatre – and that of kaumatua? Pakeha directors (like Colin McColl, Murray Lunch) can always handle this?

HONE: To answer the last part first, in relation to Colin and Murray, or the Pakeha directors, they have to buy into the ideal of the mode that they're going to work in. If they don't do that, then it's no good having a kaumatua there because it would only cause conflict, and not the type of conflict that will bring forward a stronger piece of art. So in bicultural theatre, it's the ease of the give-and-take, the acceptance of one of the other. If you do lack knowledge, then you just freely admit it, and let whoever has that knowledge come in (Gilbert 1999: 112).

Kaupapa Māori Research

In approaching the research methodologies that I would utilise, I explored how I might engage with principles of Kaupapa Māori Research, which in itself raises issues of power dynamics, such as, can non-Māori claim to be using kaupapa Māori methodologies? In *Decolonizing Methodologies* Smith¹⁰ asks, "What happens to research when the researched become the researchers?" She argues that Māori are resistant to the 'idea' of research because Western research (science) has dehumanised them and not valued Māori knowledge. Smith brings to the discussion about research, and Māori

⁸ Howard McNaughton is a Professor in the English Department at the University of Canterbury, NZ, a respected theatre critic, and trustee of Thompson's literary estate.

⁹ Hone Kouka is a leading Māori playwright.

¹⁰ Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa and Porou) is Assoc. Professor in Education and director of the International Research Institute for Māori and Indigenous Education at the University of Auckland.

research, the point that Māori and indigenous peoples worldwide are suspicious of

‘research’,

From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary ... Edward Said refers to this process as a Western discourse about the Other which is supported by ‘institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles’ ... This book identifies research as a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other (Smith 1999: 1-2).

Smith argues that it is not possible to understand the juxtaposition of indigenous peoples and research methodologies without a knowledge of the history of imperialism and how knowledge is embedded in colonial practices. She underpins her research with the economic realities of Māori people, “Unemployment, ill health and poverty underpin what on the surface look like idyllic conditions. Young people are sent away to seek further education and employment. Many people live on welfare benefits ... In the mid-1980s also, a government economic restructuring programme began which took away farm subsidies, privatised state industries and instituted a raft of ‘user-pays’ policies. This signalled New Zealand’s neo-liberal economic experiment, one that resulted in huge redundancies and tore the heart out of the Maori labour force” (Smith 1999: 96). These are some of the issues that *Songs to the Judges* concerns itself with.

Smith argues that, “Kaupapa Māori Research has become a way of structuring assumptions, values, concepts, orientations and priorities in research” (1999: 183). One question she raises is: can a non-indigenous person be involved in Kaupapa Māori

Research? There are many responses to this, but one is that they can be, if they work with someone who is indigenous to guide them and that they are very clear in declaring that they are not indigenous and do not speak ‘for Māori’, “Kathy Irwin characterizes Kaupapa Maori as research which is ‘culturally safe’ which involves the ‘mentorship’ of elders, which is culturally relevant and appropriate while satisfying the rigour of research” (ibid: 184). In my research I satisfied this requirement by having Rai Rakatau stand alongside and guide the Māori aspects of the work: from speaking for the group at hui; to directing the Māori actors in chant and whai kōrero (oration, rhetoric); accompanying me to the daily meetings with the administration of *Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae*; and giving advice on protocol. But there was a line to be walked, where it could be possible to be so politically correct so as not to accomplish the task at hand. So, whilst in daily life we followed the protocols of working on the marae, for example, not eating or drinking in the whare wānanga (house of learning), within the performance these were often waived, for instance the Pākehā actors wore boots inside the whare, and in ‘We Spit on Your Court’ water was spat at the Judge. As director I negotiated the way through the bicultural labyrinth maintaining my vision for the performance and remaining flexible enough to accept input from the kaumatua.

I raised this question about the role of the director and the relationship of power dynamics in bicultural theatre in an interview with Don Selwyn, producer of *He Taonga Films*, who acted in Thompson’s production of *Awatea* and rehearsed for his production of *Songs to the Judges*:

Lilicherie: I directed Songs to the Judges because I went to Parihaka ... my aim was for a bicultural production, but the question was how to achieve that as a Pākehā director, how to share the power?

Don: I think it's very difficult in a way, and in a way Mervyn had that difficulty too. I think it's even more difficult when you write it. I don't think it's so bad when you direct it, but when you write it, it's very difficult for you to step outside it and look at it objectively because so much goes into it ...

Lilicherie: In the end you were not performing in 'Songs to the Judges'?

Don: There were two things about *Songs to the Judges* ... One was that we had a conflict about the cultural elements in it. I was responsible for getting a whole lot of people together, Māoris in particular, to work on it and then I felt that my presence ... because he found it difficult to actually come to terms with my cultural concept ... that I preferred to let him handle the production. It wasn't a personal thing, it happened to be an editorial position. That's why I didn't perform (2002).

What is evident from the interview are the gaps and silences, where Selwyn indicates that he and Thompson held different cultural viewpoints, "we had a conflict over the cultural elements in it ... he found it difficult to come to terms with my cultural concept", and so Selwyn left the performance very close to the opening night. I questioned Selwyn on this topic because in his Introduction to *Songs to The Judges* Thompson states: "... I approached my subject with a great deal of caution. Even so, rehearsals were a nightmare. With only ten days to go we lost Don Selwyn, a brilliant actor I had worked with harmoniously in the past, but with whom I had communication problems in this particular production." In the interview it is very clear that Selwyn does not want to say anything damaging about Thompson and was respectful of the man and his work, refusing to cite specific issues they disagreed over, but he does say there was a

cultural rift between him and Thompson, Māori and Pākehā, during the rehearsals of this very political production which were unresolvable and caused them to split.

My research is based primarily on directing and observing the bicultural relationship between the actors in the making of the performance of *Songs to the Judges*, as an ethnographer in this small theatre group. Smith claims that research is a powerful intervention which has, in the majority of cases, benefited the researcher and the dominant in society. She warns that researchers need to recognize the power dynamic which is embedded in the relationship with their subjects. As the director I observed privileged information and have the power to distort, make invisible or exaggerate, and whilst I endeavour to have an objective eye, I am aware of the problems in writing up the research objectively, which is one reason why the interview and video materials are extremely useful bases of information¹¹. To help researchers become culturally more sensitive Smith has published a list of research strategies on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 signifies no relationship with Māori,

- 1 the strategy of avoidance whereby the researcher avoids dealing with the issues or with Maori;
- 2 the strategy of 'personal development' whereby the researchers prepare themselves by learning Maori language, attending *hui* and becoming more knowledgeable about Maori concerns;
- 3 the strategy of consultation with Maori where efforts are made to seek support and consent;
- 4 the strategy of 'making space' where research organizations have recognized and attempted to bring more Maori researchers and 'voices' into their own organization (Smith 1999: 176-77).

¹¹ See DVD accompanying dissertation.

Utilising the continuum of this scale in my personal preparation for the research project, I worked with strategies two, three and four by: enrolling in a course in te reo Māori; by attending hui and learning an introduction to Māori protocol; by consulting and seeking consent from Māori to tell the histories of their region; and by making space by asking Rai Rakatau into the group to work alongside me. I worked with these strategies not because I had read about them, but because of my past experience and the cultural *faux pas* I had made in directing *Electra* when asking my Māori collaborators to do things they could not culturally do, for instance, asking a woman to demonstrate taiaha to a man, when in her iwi (tribe) women did not use taiaha.

Smith claims that indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology, and need to be acknowledged openly and discussed as a part of the result of the research, as well as be presented back to the people in a manner they can understand. In the rehearsals on the marae, the group followed the protocols of the space, not taking food or drink into the whare wānanga, and within the work itself by beginning and ending each rehearsal in a circle with a waiata. Kaupapa Māori Research sets out to make a positive difference for those being researched, to have respect for people, and to share knowledge. My acknowledgement of Kaupapa Māori Research strategies was based on respect for the people I was working alongside, not to be 'politically correct'. My introduction to this method of work began whilst working with Rawini Pene and *Te Rere o te Whetu Whakangahau* where the group began and ended each session in a circle, often holding hands, singing waiata (songs) and saying

a karakia (chant or prayer). This was also my experience when participating in rehearsals with Jim Moriarty and *Te Rakau Hua o Te Wao Tapu* and is a way of proceeding that I encourage in rehearsal situations. Again, this method of proceeding takes a little more time, and needs to be factored into the rehearsal schedule. In practical terms this was not a new way of working for me, for this particular bicultural work. These actions were an integral part of the whole in researching the material, rehearsal and performance criteria.

In planning a bicultural theatre performance between Māori and Pākehā factors to be built explicitly into the research are the different values between the cultures and their different concepts of time and space. In relation to time, the rehearsal period needs to be longer than a Western commercial production to accommodate the actors' possible need to attend, for instance, a tangi¹² which may take up to three days. I planned for this possibility, but of course having one person absent from an ensemble work retards the whole process.

Smith raises the political agenda of Kaupapa Māori Research being counter-hegemonic, of setting out to make a difference in peoples lives and claiming it has an agenda of transforming "institutional practices and research frameworks", so that in effect the form of the research is as political as the content. This is of course also the agenda of political theatre, where form is advocated as being political, and an issue that I will focus

¹² Tangi (to cry), the name given to mourning and funerals - tangihanga. A tangi is a gathering on the home marae of the person who died (Māori are usually buried on their turangawaewae (home ground) and family will travel from all the corners of the country to attend, to remember the dead, speak, meet each other. Not only the immediate individual family will attend, but people from inter-connected iwi (tribes) and hapu (sub-tribes or clans).

on in relation to Thompson's work. One often walks a tightrope when using Kaupapa Māori Research methodology; on one hand there is the possibility of being attacked by the academy for not being rigorous, and on the other by the tangata whenua for not being useful,

Spelling out the limitations of a project, the things that are not addressed, is most important ... Indigenous research focuses and situates the broader indigenous agenda in the research domain ... Negotiating and transforming institutional practices and research frameworks is as significant as the carrying out of actual research programmes. This makes indigenous research a highly political activity and while that is understood by very experienced non-indigenous researchers and organizations it can also be perceived as a threatening activity ... Research can be judged as 'not rigorous', 'not robust', 'not real', 'not theorized', 'not valid', 'not reliable' ... While researchers are trained to conform to the models provided for them, indigenous researchers have to meet these criteria as well as indigenous criteria which can judge research 'not useful', 'not indigenous', 'not friendly', 'not just'. Reconciling such views can be difficult (Smith 1999: 140).

Insider/Outsider

I ask, am I hybrid? Who am I, inside as director and outside as researcher? Smith addresses this question, as 'Insider/Outsider research'.

Most research methodologies assume that the researcher is an outsider able to observe without being implicated in the scene. This is related to positivism and notions of objectivity and neutrality. Feminist research and other more critical approaches have made the insider methodology much more acceptable in qualitative research ... The critical issue with insider research is the constant need for reflexivity. At a general level insider researchers have to have ways of thinking critically about their processes, their relationships and the quality and richness of their data and analysis (Smith 1999: 137).

What made me an outsider? I was the director. I was observing the group process from the outside. I was writing up the results. I was researching. What made me an insider? I was the director. I was collaborating on a theatre performance, I was inside the

work. I was dramaturging the work, putting it into action. I was an artist, bringing a vision to life, in terms of colour, sound, space, light, dance, text, bodies, relationships. I was a participant in the group dynamic. Smith claims that,

Insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble. It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position (Smith 1999: 139).

In an interview with me Howard McNaughton introduced the topic of insider/outsider research:

Have you read up the theory of participant observation ethnography? It's the idea that the ethnographer going into a culture has the objective of achieving cultural cooperation – the ethnographer (if you like would take the position of the director) has the dual function of being a participant and being an observer which means to interpret it and constantly to switch from one hat to the other through the whole co-operation. And that way the ethnographer is able to become both an insider and an outsider, claiming a necessary distance from time to time but also claiming involvement, and that's written up very well by James Clifford. But it has struck me from time to time that that is a very interesting paradigm for bicultural theatre practice. If you also have a *kaumatua* present that means that there is a different play of distances happening all the time doesn't it? I am not saying that that idea would be new in the theatre, I am just saying that that is an interesting way of explaining bicultural theatre (McGregor: 2000).

In *The Predicament of Culture* Clifford addresses the ethnographic debate arguing that,

“Participant observation” serves as shorthand for a continuous tacking between the “inside” and “outside” of events: on the one hand grasping the sense of specific occurrences and gestures empathetically, on the other stepping back to situate these meanings in wider contexts ... Understood literally, participant observation is a paradoxical, misleading formula, but it may be taken seriously if reformulated in hermeneutic terms as a dialectic of experience and interpretation (Clifford 1988: 34).

It can be argued that the role of director is self reflexive, as the director must be part of the creation of the performance with the actors, but also be able to stand outside as the 'eye of the spectator' making objective decisions about the work, as it is being made. The praxis of the director involves this split between being 'insider' and 'outsider' in a dialectic between experience and interpretation.

Anthropologists use participant observation to gain primary information.

Participant observation makes it possible to attend hui, to live side by side with the participants and to enter into discussions about sensitive issues, to interview the whanau and to develop a relationship together. It is this relationship which makes it possible to begin to get beneath the superficial layers of daily politeness and enter into people's lives sharing their fears and achievements. As a director I needed to be honest with the actors and kaumatua, discuss the aims of the project, and establish that I was not a threat to the actors and was not going to 'rip them off' culturally or put them in unsafe positions in performance without adequate support. The only way this trust can be established is by being a participant, by one's actions, by 'walking the talk'. The talk alone is not enough! Much of the material I gathered in this research was from participant observation, or by 'doing ethnography' in anthropological terms. Geertz defines ethnography as, "The ethnographer 'inscribes' social discourse; *he writes it down*. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted" (Geertz 1973: 19). Geertz argues for 'thick description', that in doing ethnography one uses specific techniques (for

example, keeping a diary, establishing rapport, transcribing interviews), “But it is not these things ... that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, “thick description”” (Geertz 1973: 6). According to Ryle ‘thin description’ is a literal description of an action or event, whilst ‘thick description’ engages with the interpretation of that action or event, it involves a form of analysis. My use of ethnographic ‘thick description’ is inscribed in the chapters entitled ‘Rehearsal: *Songs to the Judges*’ and ‘A Semiotic Reading of the 1998 Performance of *Songs to the Judges*’ where I interpret and analyse the work of the rehearsals and the relationships between the actors and the meanings of their bodies in three dimensional space.

Methodologies are tools which are useful for research, but an objective eye is required of the methodology itself, just as Kaupapa Māori Research can be critiqued as not rigorous, Smith critiques the integrity of Anthropology, arguing that it is the discipline, “most closely associated with the study of the Other and with the defining of primitivism (Smith 1999: 66). Whilst in my research I utilise the ethnographic method of being a ‘participant observer’, which is intrinsically the role of the director, I do so with a self reflexivity, being aware that ethnography has been criticised in recent years for its ‘authoritarian voice’. With this in mind I include the voices of others through the use of interview material, to create a heteroglossia¹³ of voices contributing differing viewpoints

¹³ “‘Heteroglossia’ assumes that ‘languages do not exclude each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways ... What is said of languages applies equally to ‘cultures’ and ‘subcultures’. See also

to my research project. This dialogical interplay of voices reflects that of Thompson's text, which was derived from the collection of oral histories and newspaper articles, among other things, a full analysis of which will be made in chapter IV. The use of multiple methodologies can be seen as a "toolkit" of theory which Clifford defines as, "The notion of theory as a toolkit means (i) The theory to be constructed is not a system but an instrument, a *logic* of the specificity of power relations and the struggles around them; (ii) That this investigation can only be carried out step by step on the basis of reflection (which will necessarily be historical in some of its aspects) on given situations" (Foucault 1980: 145; see also 1977: 208)" (1988: 23). This idea of a 'toolkit' of theory, is perhaps a way of negotiating the multiple methodologies that are engaged with in this dissertation, one of the reasons for which is that there is not a 'theory' of bicultural performance that I can draw on. Theatre research itself is in Aotearoa New Zealand a relatively new discipline, in relation to the twentieth century, and as far as I am aware I am only the second person to present a PhD in Theatre Studies and the first to negotiate the tightrope of integrating theatre practice and theory.

My research into how the bicultural meets in a theatre performance involves a meeting between practice and theory. Whilst I utilised Kaupapa Māori Research techniques and aspects of ethnography predominantly in negotiating the practice of directing a bicultural performance, in the analysis of this work I utilise different theoretical methodological strategies. The work necessitates multiple methodologies

Volosinov 1953: 291, esp. chaps. 1-3; and Todorov 1981: 88-93" (Clifford 1988:23). See also Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*.

which span postcolonial theory, intercultural theory, theatre and performance theory, semiotics and materialist theory. In addition to this there is an emphasis on experimental theatre laboratory research which is empirical, that is, based on the use of the body in space, linked to Theatre Anthropology, and relationships between the actors and the actors and the audience.

Definition of terms

Praxis

The title of this dissertation contains the word praxis and I use it not with the meaning in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of* “accepted practice; practising of an art” but with the same intention that Freire defines it, “In dialectical thought, world and action are intimately interdependent. But action is human only when it is not merely an occupation but also a preoccupation, that is, when it is not dichotomised from reflection ... This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire 1972: 28-29).

bell hooks¹⁴ advocates the private and public acknowledgement of our politics, that we ‘walk the talk’! This was something that Thompson did, he had a political affinity with the working class and his plays uncover hypocrisies and ideologies in Aotearoa New Zealand society. This exposing of power dynamics and oppression in society is the agenda of cultural materialism¹⁵, a term coined by Raymond Williams¹⁶ who raises

¹⁴ bell hooks, black American author and Professor of English at City College, New York.

¹⁵ Cultural Materialism is opposed to idealism, seeking to transform a society where people are exploited on grounds of race, gender and class.

questions such as, “Why has so much modern drama excluded direct intervention and open conflict? Why is decisive action directed at social change effectively ruled out? Why is the response to social crisis in drama a matter of careful adjustment, rather than full engagement, struggle, and alteration?” (Regan 2000: 51). I believe Thompson would have agreed with Regan when he says,

Performance in its most vital manifestation serves as a zone of contact between drama and society, calling both to account. In demystifying the conventions of dramatic production, performance also demystifies the social conventions through which behaviour is regulated and contained. In understanding one, we are better equipped to understand the other. We need, as Raymond Williams says, to look both ways” (Regan 2000: 54).

Thompson took the challenge, he was openly political in his writing and performances, incorporating open conflict into *Songs to the Judges* between Pākehā and Māori, flying in the face of the politically correct he engaged fully in the struggle seeking social change. The balance to be negotiated in this is between the purely didactic and entertainment, not to only berate the spectators, but to entertain, leaving room for them to think for themselves and form their own conclusions. In this Thompson was deeply influenced by Brecht.

Postcolonial Theory and Theatre

Smith articulates the opinion that from indigenous peoples’ perspectives, the word postcolonialism can only mean one thing, that the colonisers have left:

¹⁶ Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

The economic, cultural and scientific forms of imperialism associated with the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been reformulated. The geography of empire has been redrawn ... The Imperial armies assemble under the authority of the United Nations defending the principles of freedom, democracy and the rights of capital ... New analyses and a new language mark, and mask, the 'something' that is no longer called imperialism. For indigenous peoples, one term that has signalled the striking shift in discourse is 'post-colonial'. Naming the world as 'post-colonial' is, from indigenous perspectives, to name colonialism as finished business. In Bobby Sykes's cryptic comment post-colonial can only mean one thing: the colonizers have left. There is rather compelling evidence that in fact this has not occurred (Smith 1999: 98).

I quote Smith at length as she clearly articulates the opinion that imperialism is not over, its effects are being felt strongly in the daily economic lives of Māori people.

Postcolonial studies involves a complex web of interdisciplinary thought. It is not possible, or desirable, for the purposes of this dissertation, to elaborate on all its intricacies, but an overview of the diverse voices representing postcolonial theory is established as a ground to refer back to in my analysis of bicultural theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand. There are debates about who belongs to the postcolonial world, and settler colonies are not always included. I write from Aotearoa New Zealand and if postcolonialism is a refusal of colonialism, I see sites of decolonisation in action here and locate myself within the postcolonial discourse. For the purposes of this dissertation I use the term 'postcolonial theatre' to denote theatre, both texts and performance, that is anti-colonial and works to expose imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism in all their forms, whether written or performed by the indigenous people or by tauīwi (others).

Since the 1980s, with the increasing globalisation of culture, issues of colonialism and decolonisation have become central to thinking in the humanities. When I began this

dissertation Gilbert and Tompkin's *post-colonial drama* (1996) had just been published.

Writing now six years later, there have been many publications in this field which was then just beginning to become established. Gilbert herself is a leader in this area of study, publishing *Sightlines* in 1998 and editing *(Post) Colonial Stages* in 1999, the same year as Balme's *Decolonizing the Stage*.

Gilbert and Tompkins explain that postcolonialism and postmodernism are not the same. That whilst a postcolonial play may use postmodern literary devices¹⁷, postcolonialism has a more political agenda, "to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal relations of power based on binary oppositions such as 'us and them', 'first world and third world', 'white and black', 'coloniser and colonised'" (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996: 3). Postcolonial theory offers a cultural critique, which live theatre can often put into practice and so escape censorship where a written text cannot. Live performance can happen at any time in any place and does not need to adhere to the set text and censorship, so offering ways of being subversive.

Postcolonial theatre is influenced by colonialism, imperialism and decolonisation, with an agenda to expose oppression, it is anti-colonial resistance theatre, "This means that post-colonial theatre is always implicitly and very often explicitly political" (Balme 1999: xiii), its hallmark being what Balme calls 'the strategy of syncretization'. He argues that, "the 'decolonization' of the stage can be examined through a number of formal

¹⁷ For example: having a non-linear structure, being open ended, utilising the disharmonious juxtaposition of scenes, and including found material such as newspaper articles.

strategies which involve the combination and amalgamation of indigenous performance forms within the framework of the Western notion of theatre” (Balme 1999: 1).

In *Decolonizing the Stage* Balme coins the term ‘syncretic theatre’ to describe postcolonial experiments in playscripts that utilise different performance forms from both the Western and indigenous performance traditions. He realised that the traditional analysis of plot, theme and character development was inadequate to analyse what was happening in postcolonial drama. The term ‘syncretic¹⁸ theatre’ inscribes the analysis of performance of postcolonial plays that make use of both ritual forms of indigenous culture and Western naturalistic dialogue, often being written in both English and the indigenous language(s) of the postcolonial land.

Whilst Balme could see similarities between the dramatic forms emerging from postcolonial countries, the individual playwrights were writing in isolation, often unaware of other indigenous authors experimenting with a similar form and content. *Decolonizing the Stage* is of special interest for my research, even though it was published after my experimental laboratory research and performance, because it gives a name and description to what I was doing in relation to Marae Theatre and the meeting of Māori ritual and Western theatre forms.

Balme suggests that the use of the word syncretism has taken a reversal of meaning from “the pejorative usage in the nineteenth century [which] mirrors very much that

¹⁸ Balme has borrowed the term ‘syncretism’ from comparative religion where elements of religions are merged.

century's concern with national identity and difference ... to those of tolerance, reinterpretation, and invention in contemporary ethnographic discourse ... linked to the decolonization process. As Richard Schechner has observed: "there is no culture uninfluenced by foreigners – invaders, evangelists (Moslem, Christian, Buddhist), traders, colonizers" (Balme 1999: 15-16).

When Balme began his inquiry in the late 1980s postcolonial criticism was predominantly Eurocentric and focused on text analysis. He argues that since this time two things have changed the way postcolonial criticism is utilised,

The first is the 'discovery' of post-colonialism in the United States ... The other significant development is the metamorphosis of the term 'post-colonial' from a general epithet with temporal and spatial coordinates, however ill defined they may be, into the 'invention' of a critical approach or methodology ... Post-colonialism as a critical method has been decisively influenced by the work of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak – the 'Holy Trinity', as Robert Young has termed them (Balme 1999: vi-vii).

Postcolonial studies can be split into two main strands:¹⁹ the history of decolonisation and the fight against colonial rule, with founders such as Aime Cesaire²⁰ and Franz Fanon²¹; and the Western intellectual tradition which focuses on language, ideology, culture and subjectivities. This strand draws on the work of: Volosinov,

¹⁹ See Tiffin in *Past the Last Post*.

²⁰ Founder of the Negritude Movement and a member of the Martinique Communist Party. Aime Cesaire's moving and powerful *Discourse on Colonialism* (first published in 1950) indicts colonial brutality in terms that are clearly inflected by Marxist analysis of capitalism. Marx emphasised that under capitalism money and commodities begin to stand in for human relations and for human beings, objectifying them and robbing them of their human essence. Similarly, Cesaire claims that colonialism not only exploits but dehumanises and objectifies the colonised subject, as it degrades the coloniser himself. He explains this by a stark 'equation: colonisation = "thingification"' (1972: 21).

²¹ Franz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. One of the leading political analysts of our time and theorist of the African struggle for independence. Born in Martinique in 1925, he sympathised with the Algerian Nationalist Movement and influenced, among others, Malcolm X and the Black Panther leaders.

Gramsci, Lukacs, Williams, Althusser, Foucault, Derrida, Marx, Saussure, Levi-Straus, and so on (cc Loomba 1998: 20). However, it is the 'holy trinity' of Said, Bhabha and Spivak who have influenced the postcolonial as a methodology with their critique of imperialism, colonisation and decolonisation. The central text of importance to postcolonialism is often claimed to be Said's *Orientalism* which links power and subjectivity in the colonial discourse of Orientalism. Said's book reveals how the West represented the East, creating ways of seeing which have contributed to colonial power through writings which emphasised the differences between 'them' and 'us', East and West creating binaries which fed into stereotypes of: East=lazy, West=industrious, East=nature, West= civilised, etcetera. Said's revolutionary thought, where he connected knowledge and power based on Foucault's research, was that the West's knowledge of the East, permitted the West power over the East.

James Clifford²² argues that the development of postcolonial art is a response to the binary cultural encounter and hybridity (or syncretic art) reflects this interaction. "The paradox of cultural heterogeneity, or cross-cultural capacity, lies in the evolutionary thrust it restores to orders of the imagination, the ceaseless dialogue it inserts between hardened conventions" (Balme 1999: 12). Balme is quoting Wilson Harris who proposes creative syncretism as opposed to monocultural Western theory, whereas Homi Bhabha argues for a hybridity that eludes polarity between them and us, black and white, for a 'third space',

²² Clifford, James & Marcus, George (eds). *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

and the hybrid nature of both colonised and coloniser. Hybridity, in Aotearoa New Zealand, a settler culture, is a predominant pattern where few in essentialist terms can call themselves 'pure' blooded. The term 'hybridity' as Robert Young²³ posits has strong traces of its racial history as the referential term of racial classification in Victorian times. Only separate species can form hybrids and so the word infers implicitly that different races are different and form a hierarchy. Lawson argues that settler societies have been resistant to postcolonial definition and reluctant to acknowledge their role as colonisers. He sees the settler colony as having a dual identity, as coloniser at the same time as being colonised.

Postcolonialism claims to respect difference, but without reversing the poles of dominator/dominated. Whilst it is a very harmonious aim for dominant theorists to call for a 'peaceful' meeting point, is this possible or desirable in relation to decolonization? "A theory of post-colonialism that fails to recognise this distinction between 'differences' will recreate the spurious hierarchies, misreadings, silencings, and ahistoricisms that are part of the imperial enterprise. Critiques of post-colonialism are frequently responses to arguments based primarily on attempts to homogenise texts, histories, and cultures" (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996: 4).

Decolonizing the Stage focuses on texts in English and how 'indigenous cultural texts are incorporated into and often alter Western dramaturgical conventions'. Cultural

²³ Robert Young. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995.

has created a theoretical discourse ‘which questions some of the fundamental principles of Western theatrical aesthetics’ and asserts that, “syncretic theatre must be judged and assessed as one of the major developments in twentieth-century theatre” (Balme 1999: 24).

Postcolonial writers are being published and in Aotearoa New Zealand plays by Māori women, in particular, are published and subsequently performed, written by for example, Riwia Brown, Renee, and Briar Grace-Smith. The people on the margins are writing back to the metropolitan centres with confidence and sophistication. But not only that, they are writing for their own, in their own language.

Intercultural

Whilst Balme’s research is largely concentrated on texts, Barba’s²⁴ is focused on the corporeal knowledge of the actor. In Chapter IX I utilise Theatre Anthropology as a research methodology to analyse the ‘pre-expressive’ qualities of actors in *Songs to the Judges*. Theatre anthropology is studied at ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) which had its origins in 1979 being established and directed by Eugenio Barba. “ISTA is a multicultural network of performers and scholars giving life to an itinerant university whose main field of study is Theatre Anthropology” (Skeel: 17). ISTA meets when funding is offered by cultural institutions on an international basis. As at September 2001 there have been 12 sessions, each with a different theme. “ISTA’s network is centred around a permanent core of Euro-American-Asian performers and

²⁴ Eugenio Barba, director of Odin Teatret, Nordisk Theaterlaboratorium and founder of ISTA.

at September 2001 there have been 12 sessions, each with a different theme. “ISTA’s network is centred around a permanent core of Euro-American-Asian performers and professors from many universities ... It is a [...] “laboratory for research into the technical basis of the performer in a transcultural dimension. The objective of this methodological choice, deriving from an empirical approach, is the understanding of the fundamental principles which engender the performer’s “presence” or “scenic life”” (Skeel: 17). Barba defines Theatre Anthropology as, “the study of the pre-expressive scenic behaviour which lies at the base of different genres, roles and personal or collective traditions” (Skeel: 15). “It does not attempt to blend, accumulate or catalogue the performer’s techniques. It seeks the elementary: *the technique of techniques*” (Barba 1995: 10). To trace these *recurring principles* is the first task of Theatre Anthropology. “Theatre Anthropology is not concerned with the application of the paradigms of cultural anthropology to theatre and dance. It is not the study of the performative phenomena in those cultures which are traditionally studied by anthropologists, nor should Theatre Anthropology be confused with the anthropology of performance” (Skeel: 16).

Richard Schechner has directed and theorised intercultural performance for many years. In 1985 he noted that, “Anthropology and theatrical methods are converging” (26). Turner experimented with performing ethnographies as did Brook in *The Ik* and both Brook and Barba have been leaders in performance ‘barbers’ where performances are exchanged, between the theatre group and the audience (community) for which it

performs. Schechner turns to anthropology because he sees convergences between it and theatre,

Just as theatre is anthropologizing itself, so anthropology is being theatricalised ... The convergence of anthropology and theatre is part of a larger intellectual movement where the understanding of human behaviour is changing from quantifiable differences between cause and effect, past and present, form and content, etcetera ... To an emphasis on the deconstruction/reconstruction of actualities: the processes of framing, editing, and rehearsing; the making and manipulating of strips of behavior – what I call ‘restored behavior’ ... We accept our species as sapiens and fabricans: ones who think and make. We are in the process of learning how humans are also ludens and performans: ones who play and perform (Schechner 1985: 33).

The chapter on rehearsing *Songs to the Judges* explores the process of playing and performing, and perhaps playing could also be described as thinking and making. It is an investigation of bicultural human behaviour within a specific medium, in which the actors made and manipulated strips of material and worked within a specific frame. In this space the ambiguity of Schechner’s ‘between’ in *Between Theatre and Anthropology* was lived, being both the inter-relationships between the performers and the liminal space of being in-between two cultures.

CHAPTER III

TIKANGA RUA

BICULTURALISM IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another. A historical materialist therefore dissociates himself from it as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain (Benjamin 1992: 247-48).

*The coupling of two realities, irreconcilable in appearance, upon a plane which apparently does not suit them*¹ (Clifford 1988: 117).

The two realities that are being coupled together as bicultural throughout this dissertation are referred to as Māori and Pākehā, but these terms in themselves are not without dissention. Smith explains that,

Although the word 'Maori' is an indigenous term it has been identified as a label which defines a colonial relationship between 'Maori' and 'Pakeha', the non-indigenous settler population ... Perhaps tangata whenua might be more appropriate. 'Indigenous peoples' is a relatively recent term which emerged in the 1970s out of the struggles primarily of the American Indian Movement (AIM), and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood (Smith 1999: 6-7).

Not only is the word Māori a contested term, so too is Pākehā, one of its interpretations being, "New Zealanders of a European background, whose cultural

¹ Max Ernst, "What is the Mechanism of Collage?"

values and behaviour have been primarily formed from the experiences of being a member of the dominant group of New Zealand” (Spoonley 1988: 63). *Tauīwi* is the term also frequently used for non Māori.

Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi²

The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [Intention] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original (Benjamin 1992: 77).

Before engaging with the topic of bicultural theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the bicultural foundation of this country, which was the first ‘official’ bicultural meeting in the land between two peoples, two languages, two cultures and two worldviews, will be considered. The Treaty is introduced to place my research in a political context; to clarify the use of the word bicultural in the title of the dissertation; and as a base to refer back to in the discussion of the playscript *Songs to the Judges* and Thompson’s and my own productions of it. “For anyone working in the Maori world, a reasonably detailed knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi is essential, though not of what you think the Treaty says but of what is currently the state of tirititanga, of knowledge about it” (Ritchie: 134). The Treaty established a country which acknowledged a bicultural philosophy, and how this has been interpreted since 1840 illuminates how we have identified ourselves,

² The name ‘Waitangi’ means ‘waters of lamentation’.

The Treaty guarantees two jurisdictions, the one derived from British sovereignty, the other from aboriginal rights and common Maori law ... Either you accept that, or you are forced to reject the Treaty altogether and find some other basis on which to establish the relationship between Maori and Pakeha (Ritchie 1992: 150).

This dissertation is predicated on an acceptance of the Treaty, and the following interpretation of how it has been manipulated is presented as my understanding of events as gleaned from my research.

What follows is a whakapapa (genealogy) of the Treaty of Waitangi and bicultural theatre interwoven as 'taki rua', that which goes in twos and is the name of a particular Māori weaving pattern, as a way of seeing how (and if) the different policies of the governments of Aotearoa New Zealand, through the way the Treaty has been interpreted, also applies, or has any correspondence, to the development of bicultural theatre. I am not an historian, and this genealogy is not offered as an impeccable historical record of events, but rather as a socio-political analysis creating a link between theatre performance and everyday performance, as theatre is not a separate isolated entity on its own within our culture, as Boal³ argues, "all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them" (1974: Foreword).

The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of New Zealand. It was signed in 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and approximately 500 Māori chiefs representing many, though not all, of the hapū of New Zealand. It was an exchange of promises between two sovereign peoples, giving rise to obligations for each party (Te Puni Kokiri 2001: 14).

³ Augusto Boal. *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

Unlike many other colonised peoples, Māori went into partnership with the colonisers by signing the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, however, this was not unanimous as, “ A number of prominent chiefs refused to sign the Treaty on the grounds that their chiefly authority would be restricted” (Te Puni Kokiri 2001: 31). For Māori the Treaty has always been an important document, but for Pākehā it was a dead document until Ngata⁴ had it republished in 1922 when the text then became accessible to the general public. The actual Treaty was for many years mislaid in parliament, rat nibbled and burnt around the edges, until the celebration of the centenary of its signing in 1940. Even then, it was not until the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 that the Treaty became of total relevance once again to both Pākehā and Māori.

In 1840 New Zealand was a predominantly Māori country, with a population of approximately 150,000 Māori and 2,000 Europeans. Because Māori authority was iwi based, there was no ‘national’ law or leader, and whilst Māori had authority over their own people to maintain tribal law and order, they had no control over the immigrants, many of whom had escaped from prison sentences in Australia. Britain was called upon, by both Māori and Pākehā, to control the often unruly white settlers and in 1833 James Busby was sent to Aotearoa New Zealand as Consul. In 1835 Māori believed there was a danger of Aotearoa New Zealand being colonised by France, and Māori chiefs called on Britain, as the most powerful seafaring nation at the time, to intervene.

⁴ Sir Apirana Ngata, Māori leader, land reformer, scholar, author, teacher, poet, politician who held the Eastern Māori parliamentary seat from 1905-1943.

At this time Busby (on behalf of the Crown) was working to establish a political body of Māori who could administer their own affairs and in 1835 the Confederation of Tribes⁵ made the ‘Declaration of Independence of New Zealand’ which had four sections: it proclaimed collective ownership; it declared the independence of the territory; it declared Sovereign authority and it agreed to meet annually – for a trade and economic imperative. It asked for protection from the King of England and asked for the Māori flag to be acknowledged by Britain. Britain acknowledged the Declaration of Independence and until 1840 New Zealand was an independent country⁶. The wording of the Declaration of Independence/He Whakaputanga o te Rangitiratanga o Nu Tirenī clearly delineates the role that Māori were seeking from the Crown in relation to their own independence, “the United Tribes asked King William the VI to ‘continue to be the parent of their infant State’ and to ‘become its Protector from all attempts upon its independence’” (sic) (Te Puni Kokiri: 27).

Māori did not have nationalist sentiments until Busby agitated for a united body of Māori leaders as a representative governing body. Each iwi had its own leader and they respected each other’s tino rangitiratanga (sovereignty). The Declaration of Independence paved the way for the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi by creating a unified body of Māori leaders with whom the Crown could negotiate. A question that

⁵ The Confederation of Tribes was comprised of a group of Northern tribes.

⁶ Paraphrased from *A background to the Treaty of Waitangi*, Claudia Orange interviewed by Kathryn Asare, National Radio, 1988.

arises from this is, why did Britain negotiate the Treaty when she could have declared ‘right of discovery’ and imposed force to take power in Aotearoa New Zealand? Two reasons suggested by Orange⁷ are: the need to secure peaceful Māori acceptance and co-operation for the setting up of a British administration; and because Britain had internationally acknowledged the Declaration of Independence.

The night before the Treaty was to be read out to the gathered Māori chiefs at Waitangi, Henry Williams, head of the Church Missionary Society, translated the English text into Māori. He did not make a word for word translation of the English but reworked it into a Māori version,

there was no Māori equivalent of sovereignty, so Williams used *kawanatanga*. This is a transliteration of governor. In the first article Māori agree to cede *kawanatanga*, (governance) but the second article uses the words *tino rangatiratanga*, which means more than mere possession, it means ‘full chieftainship’ which includes control over as well as ownership and possession of land and other resources (Sorrenson: 9).

The day before the signing, the Treaty was read aloud in Māori to the assembled Māori chiefs, many of who were in opposition to it because they objected to the Crown gaining more power. However, “Assured of that full chieftainship, the leading chiefs, after vigorously debating the Treaty that was read out in Māori to them, assented to it at Waitangi on 6 February 1840” (Sorrenson: 9). The reasons why Māori signed the Treaty are many, but included: the benefits of British justice, regulated land sales and increased trade, “But this much is clear: the drafts, in English or in Māori, were merely

⁷ Orange, Claudia. *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Limited, 1987.

drafts; it is the Māori text which was signed at Waitangi” (Ross: 133). It must be noted however, that, “The language of the Treaty of Waitangi is not indigenous Māori; it is missionary Māori, specifically Protestant missionary Māori” (Ross: 136). This means that although the Treaty was written in Māori, it was written/translated by a missionary whose first language was not Māori and who had been translating the bible into Māori. In his translation of the Treaty Williams frequently used the same words he had used in translating the scriptures, for example, the word *kawanatanga* for governor. This crossing of genres is in itself an example of Bakhtin’s term *heteroglossia*⁸, firstly by being a mix of languages both English and *te reo Māori*, and secondly, a mix of the forms of the languages between the religious and the legal government jargon which in itself would have created another level of meaning for Māori who were familiar with the bible, as many were.

What sort of equality is it where only one side constructs the wording, and therefore dominates the sense of the agreement? Not one word of the Treaty, in either language, was changed at Waitangi by agreement. Hobson made the Treaty – it was Hobson’s choice ... Thus our relationship began in a muddle of metaphors about the very thing that needed to be made most clear, political authority – in a word, power, or in another, sovereignty (Ritchie: 141).

In the postcolonial world many indigenous people are,

rewriting the past treaties in new and modern terms. Such treaties did little to establish native rights. They were primarily concerned to establish settler rights.

⁸ Bakhtin, MM. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. In the introduction Holquist offers these definitions of *heteroglossia*: “(the word “heteroglossia” itself, “word-with-a-loop-hole,” “word-with-a-sideways-glance,” “intonational quotation marks” and so forth)”. A mix of discourses.

It is, after all, only through the Treaty that non-Maori can claim any right to be here ... The Treaty has defined a space for us all at this time. Thus everything in both the Maori world and the Pakeha can be related to the Treaty and its consequences (Ritchie: 148).

A comparison of the Treaty of Waitangi with treaties signed between Britian and North American Indians yields interesting differences. North American Indians signed over three hundred treaties, whereas Māori signed only one,

Waitangi differed from North American Indian treaties in several ways. It applied to the whole of Aotearoa New Zealand ... Under the English text of the Treaty of Waitangi Māori ceded sovereignty; whereas the American Indians did not do this and remained, in Mr. Justice Marshall's famous phrase, 'domestic dependent nations'. They retained, at least on reservations, a degree of autonomy that Māori were not allowed in New Zealand. For better or worse, New Zealand authorities insisted on imposing the austinian notion that sovereignty within the nation was one and indivisible (Sorrenson 1998: 4).

For the British Crown the word sovereignty signified 'supreme ruler' and the Austinian⁹ ideal that this is vested in 'one' ruler, whereas for Māori the words *tino rangatiratanga* permitted multiple sovereignty in the *whenua* (land). This is a moment of heteroglossia, the word-with-a-loop-hole, which has enabled the Treaty to transcend historical determinacy, from the colonial to the postcolonial. From a contemporary Māori perspective Donna Awatere defines Māori Sovereignty as:

Maori sovereignty is the Maori ability to determine our own destiny and to do so from the basis of our land and fisheries. In essence, Maori sovereignty seeks nothing less than the acknowledgement that New Zealand is Maori land, and further seeks the return of that land. At its most conservative it could be interpreted as the desire for a bicultural society, one in which *taha Maori*

⁹ Austin, John. *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined*, 1832. His writing had a strong influence on the English legal system and legal theory.

receives an equal consideration with, and equally determines the course of this country as *taha pakeha*. It certainly demands an end to monoculturalism (1982: 38).

This contradiction in meaning between sovereignty and *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty) is a cultural one and has implications in relation to the translation of the English into *te reo Māori*. Walter Benjamin in 'The Task of the Translator'¹⁰ highlights the politics of translation, the (im)possibility of translating the full meaning of a text from one language into another,

The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. Particularly when translating from a language very remote from his own he must go back to the primal elements of language itself and penetrate to the point where word, image, and tone converge (Benjamin 1992: 81).

Benjamin argues that faithful word by word translation does not necessarily confer the meaning or intention of the original text. Even the form of the Treaty in English with its extra-ordinarily long sentence in Article One was not translatable into Māori, which was an oral and not a written language until a few years prior to when the Treaty was signed. In 'Humpty-Dumpty and the treaty of Waitangi' Bruce Biggs interrogates the Māori text of the Treaty and its relationship to the English text. He takes the first sentence of the English version as a case in point saying that,

Such a long, involved, but carefully crafted sentence, simply would not occur in oral Māori. Nor, perhaps, in oral English, but until very shortly before 1840 all

¹⁰ Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*.

‘indigenous’ Māori was oral and there was no special style associated with the written word (Biggs 1989: 302).

Biggs argues that the Treaty and Te Tiriti are not equivalent because the words in each are not equivalent, the Māori words being more general than the ‘precise’ English. Sorrenson points out that the Treaty of Waitangi differed from American Indian treaties in that they, “were always written in English, but the Treaty of Waitangi had two texts, English and Māori” (5). However, the fact that there were originally two texts was not acknowledged at the height of imperialism and the English version was taken as the ‘official’ text for over one hundred years. Ross in her ground-breaking analysis of the Māori text clearly highlights this inconsistency, “The fact that the Treaty of Waitangi was an agreement in the Māori language is consistently ignored” (Ross: 129).

The Treaty itself has created a loophole in meaning/intention and this is what has enabled it to become a document that can be utilised to redress the colonisation of Māori people. In the fact that the Treaty was written in two languages (and this was not a ‘mistake’ the colonisers of the United States made) we see that in the founding document, the meeting point between Māori and British has a (mis)understanding in their relationship based on language. The bicultural meet in a difference between an oral and a written culture. It can be asked if the Treaty is in fact a bicultural agreement when it was formulated by one side only and in writing, even Māori writing, which was not a cultural artefact for Māori people. Many of the Māori signatures are the marks of

their moko¹¹ or fingerprints, not written, but an imprint of their body on paper, unable to be copied, falsified, or mimicked.

In seeking to understand how the meeting between culture and culture transcends the parchment of the Treaty in relation to bodies on the stage, I have woven the history of the Treaty and bicultural theatre, not in the form of an essay, but point by point, creating a visual weaving of the taki rua weaving pattern by using italic script for information on bicultural theatre and straight script for that on the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This genealogy indicates the reciprocal movement between action and reaction, between theatre as a response to politics and theatre as shaping politics and moves beyond an analysis of biculturalism based on individual psychology to one based on social formation as Darder suggests,

In the face of wide social and economic inequalities, biculturalism as a political construct must move beyond simple notions of individual psychological theories of identity, liberal paradigms of pluralism and unproblematic notions of two distinct cultural worldviews interacting. Instead a genealogy of biculturalism must be theoretically grounded in the historical intricacies of social formations that emerge from the collision between dominant/subordinant cultural, political, and economic relations of power which function to determine the limits and boundaries of institutional life in this country (Darder: 11).

Taki rua: a weaving of the historical context of the Treaty and bicultural theatre

1870s–1920s Popular theatre included Gilbert and Sullivan, vaudeville and pantomime and was presented in the colony by professional international touring companies. The colonists looked back in wonder at the culture from home, and brought it out, with no thought of the ‘New Zealand’ play. Māori were not frequently

¹¹ Personalised tattoo.

represented on the Western stage, but if they were it was either for curiosity value performing haka, or if Māori characters were written into the text, the casting of a European in blackface was often the accepted practice.

1874-80 In Britain, Disraeli's first Ministry. Queen Victoria was made Empress of India (1876). In 1874 war in Ashantee in West Africa, and the Zulu war in 1879.

1881 Parihaka was sacked.

1882 A deputation of Māori chiefs (the Taiwhanga mission) travelled to England to present a petition to the Queen requesting, "that the Queen appoint a 'Royal English Commission' to investigate and rectify laws that contravened the Treaty, and that permission be given to establish a Maori parliament which would restrain the New Zealand government in its endeavours to set aside the Treaty ... It listed legislative acts and ordinances that were said to be 'against the principles contained in the Treaty'" (Orange 1987: 206). The members of the Taiwhanga mission were not permitted to meet with the Queen who decreed that their petition was the responsibility of the New Zealand government.

1893 Women's suffrage, New Zealand women, Māori and Pākehā, were the first to vote in the world.

1895 *The Land of the Moa* by George Leitch (born in London) one of the few first reported New Zealand plays. Māori performance was a novelty for Leitch's audience, who had little contact with the Māori population. However, Māori performance was popular and the cast included a haka party – in Christchurch there were about six dancers ... It is unclear how Leitch found his performers; according to the Evening Post (30 July 1895) they came from Otaki and were 'not very expert, but the Maori dancing is always invigorating, and they fairly "brought down" the house"' (Kiernander 1990: 41). It is unclear how Leitch deployed the haka group, as the lead Māori characters were played by Europeans. Perhaps the haka group was utilised to perform 'authentic' chant, tangi and haka as background for the main action. The Māori actors represented Māori, and this even extended to one of the actors playing her real life role, "The guides Sophia and Kate in Act 4 were based on real guides at the Terraces, and Leitch later had the actual Sophia playing herself in the Sydney season"¹² (Kiernander 1990: 44). Kiernander also notes that there are no characters who represent white settlers and the New Zealand landscape is frightening and a place one

¹² The Pink and White Terraces were a famous tourist attraction in the central North Island and Sophia was a popular Māori guide. They were destroyed by volcanic action in the late 1800s.

only visits, a 'wonderland' of the strange and dangerous. In this play the New Zealand landscape is of more importance than the plot.

Leitch's depiction of Māori language, the little that there is, is inaccurate with American influences, including reference to a 'tomahawk', 'Medicine Man', and 'turkey egg'. The tribespeople are represented as stereotypical savages, whose predominant speech pattern is "Ooh Ah!". The action portraying the indigenous people consists mainly of Māori dance around a fire in a kind of voodoo witch ceremony (Act 3: i :122). The severed head of Hangi is presented on a plate (suggestive of cannibalism, because of the pun on the word *hangi*, which is the cooking method used by Māori). There is no specific music or Māori performance included in the text, only vague references to it, for example, 'a Tangi is heard', 'a Maori chant is heard off stage' (Act 4: 143) and "Beating of drums, weird music" (Act 5: 145). This could be called a 'hybrid' performance, but it has minimal Māori content and smacks more of Orientalism, with its imagined Otherness. Māori did not have drumming at this point of time (although in recent years there has been research into the use of drums earlier in Māori history). The beating of drums seems to 'imagine the primitive' by way of 'African' drumming and strange religious rites. The play ends with the gunboat 'Ariel' (reminiscent of *The Tempest*) at wharf and *RULE BRITANNIA* played by the orchestra (Act 5: v: 159). Māori are represented as quaint, exotic natives, as stereotypes. This is theatre from the perspective of the colonisers, by the colonisers, for the colonisers, in their role of civilising the barbarians.

Regardless of the promises of the Treaty, history shows that Māori were colonised by the British with the loss of their language, land, culture, and for many, their identity. A fundamental policy in the colonisation process was that of assimilation, "the first and third articles of the Treaty were being used to bring Māori and their resources within the scope of the law as part of a policy of assimilation. This was to be complemented by educational policy, originally promoted by the missions, later by native and secular state schools" (Sorrenson 1998: 7). New Zealand's policy of assimilation, that is, of amalgamating the races into a single society was, consciously or not, articulated at the very first official act of bicultural interaction, "At Waitangi in 1840 as Lt. Governor Hobson got each Maori signature on the Treaty, he uttered the only Maori words he knew: 'He iwi tatou' .. 'We are now one People'" (Sorrenson 1998: 8).

1903 Tapu - Māori comic opera - libretto by Arthur Adams, music by Alfred Hill. Tapu took licence with Māori tradition, featuring haka and poi dances. Peter Downes reported that, "It turned out to be part contemporary comic opera and part Maori

concert. *By falling between the two styles it succeeded in neither*" (Harcourt 1978: 22).

1908 *First printed action songs, "The action song is a recent innovation; the first ones were composed early this century by men such as Sir Apirana Ngata and Paraire Tomoana"* (Salmond 1974: 112).

1914 WWI, Māori soldiers were not permitted to carry guns, unlike their Pākehā colleagues, in the fighting. Unlike the Pākehā soldiers, there was no allocation of land or veterans pension available for Māori on return from the war. Sir Apirana Ngata established the action song during WWI by utilising it in concerts which toured the country to raise funds for the Māori Soldiers' Fund. This form of performance was used for entertainment and commercial purposes from its initiation.

1918 After WWI the beginning of the Māori cultural revival, which went mostly unnoticed by Pākehā as 90% of Māori lived in rural areas, led by Apirana Ngata and Te Puea Herangi who taught young people action songs, poi and kapa haka to renew Māori cultural pride.

1920 *Marama, a New Zealand Opera of everyday life which included haka, by Syd Ribbands, music by Archie Don. The lead was played by Mere Amohau, a Māori actress. It met with success and packed houses in a tour of New Zealand catching the, "people's imagination. We'd come out of the war years and that 1918 epidemic, and there was something New Zealand, something original, something by New Zealanders for New Zealanders"*¹³ (Harcourt: 36).

1927 *Te Puea*¹⁴ *organised the first touring Māori concert party Te Pou o Mangatawhiri to give public performances to raise funds for the building of the meeting house Mahinarangi at Turangawaewae. Te Puea was inspired to establish a Māori touring group after she saw a Pacific Island group performing at Turangawaewae. This is an example of intercultural influence in Māori performance, and also establishes kapa haka, from its beginnings, being used to entertain and to generate finance. Its use in contemporary society for tourist performance is therefore a continuation of this kaupapa.*

¹³ Influenza epidemic, with a huge death toll, including large numbers of Māori.

¹⁴ Māori princess, who had the vision of, and organised the finance and building of, Mahinarangi, the Māori Queen's marae at Turangawaewae.

1930s The Depression stimulated theatre in many countries, but not in Aotearoa New Zealand, where there was still little enthusiasm for the New Zealand play, “But culture ... is a people’s response to their own environment, given creative expression in various forms by their artists and craftsmen. So an inevitable tension slowly arises in a post-colonial society between the imported and the indigenous practice of the arts ... The poet Allen Curnow wrote in the 1930s, ‘Not I, some child born in a marvellous year, will learn the trick of standing upright here’” (Harcourt 1978: 8). Curnow articulates the inferiority complex of the settlers in being neither indigenous, nor European, but still drawing on the mother country for cultural validation, although not a member of that ‘master’ culture.

1940s and 1950s There was little Māori involvement in theatre. Māori were often cast to sing and dance, fulfilling the stereotype that ‘they’ can all sing and dance.

1941 Hinemoa by the Māori Musical Society in Rotorua. Te Mauri Meihana, a singer was cast in the title role.

1940s Pei Te Hurinui Jones translated The Merchant of Venice into Māori – creating a mix of Western high culture spoken in te reo Māori. This is perhaps the first properly hybrid New Zealand playscript.

A ‘national theatre’ was mooted by the government after WWII but nothing came of it.

1957 The Pohutukawa Tree, by Bruce Mason, with themes of cultural dispossession and the colonist’s self righteous mission to civilise the natives. It was a major work and regarded as a classic. Mason was the first New Zealander to promote New Zealand themes and the representation of Māori theatre as worthy of our stage. Sebastian Black¹⁵ argues that Mason used Māori oratory and chant to enhance his limited writing, whilst Selwyn applauds him for supporting bicultural theatre. Mason wrote more than thirty plays and a collection of five Māori plays. He is one of the most significant playwrights in New Zealand’s theatrical history. Mason was a Pākehā who felt the need for a Māori representation on the stage, but, the characters were still speaking from a Pākehā perspective.

1960 The Budget gave direct financial assistance to the arts by the creation of the Arts Advisory Council and The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council. New Zealand playwrights began to write with this allocation of funding.

¹⁵ Black, Sebastian. “What kind of society can develop under corrugated iron?: glimpses of New Zealand history in New Zealand plays”, *Australasian Drama Studies*, v3, no 1: 31-52.

1960s *A boom period for New Zealand theatre.*

From the coloniser's perspective, "There were some matters of emphasis on which Labour and National politicians differed but there was a central core of sentiment which they shared. They saw the Treaty as the founding act of a new nation in which two peoples from widely differing cultural backgrounds were working out their destiny together ... What stood out was the commitment to racial equality – legal, political and social – and the extent to which Maori had benefitted from it. As a result two peoples were merging into one nation. New Zealand was an example to the rest of the world of good race relations ... The Hon. R.M. Algie, for example, expressed views which were widely shared in the 60s when, referring to Maori, he said: 'Let them grow up with us, as part of us. That is what the Treaty was aimed at ... And what we are all looking forward to is the building of a New Zealand race, a fusion of Maori and European, with no distinction whatsoever, with everything open to each according to his ability' ... There was no acknowledgement that it was through the Treaty that British settlers were given the right to be in New Zealand" (Renwick: 4). The English version of the Treaty had been mislaid and the Māori version had disappeared from Pākehā thought.

1960 *Children Of The Mist, Wellington Ballet Group, choreographed by Leigh Brewer. Māori myth put to ballet. Mason wrote in Te Ao Hou, "The scene of the challenge on the marae was in my view the highlight of the ballet, because here the Maori theme and tradition seemed perfectly wedded to the technique of the dancers ... it may be only the start of a truly national indigenous ballet" (Harcourt: 136). Dance led the way in the syncretisation of indigenous performance and Western form.*

1964 "In a recent study paper entitled 'Integration of Maori and Pakeha in New Zealand', the Maori Affairs Department said: 'The Pakeha's minimum contribution to the process of integration is a willingness to accept Maoris as Maoris ... Those [Pakeha] who can go further and take an active interest in Maori things, will make a still more valuable contribution.' Such words are a challenge to the European inhabitants of this country. They show the way in which men of goodwill can pay more than mere lip service to the concept of 'Tautou, tatou' – we are but one people. Integration is very much a two-way process. It involves our two races crossing from opposite sides of the road and walking along a centre line. Neither group must be expected to submerge its individuality beneath the other" (Armstrong 1964: 8). This statement supports a policy of assimilation, but is moderated by the statement of neither losing their 'individuality beneath the other'. The Oxford dictionary defines 'integration' as, 'the ending of racial segregation; combine into a whole; bring or come

‘integration’ as, ‘the ending of racial segregation; combine into a whole; bring or come into equal membership of society’ whereas, assimilate means, ‘make like, absorb into the system’. The policy of assimilation that advocated that Māori were the same as Pākehā helped create stereotypes and promote colonial mimicry.

1964 *Awatea*, by Mason, was commissioned by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation as a radio play for Inia te Wiata and the company of Porgy and Bess. It was based on two real life situations.

1965 *Porgy and Bess* by Gershwin, national tour produced by the New Zealand Opera Company with an all Māori cast including: Inia Te Waiata, Don Selwyn, Apirana Taylor and Jim Moriarty. After the tour the cast consolidated into a group to perform indigenous culture, and applied to the Arts Council for funding for Mason’s *Awatea*, but were not funded on the grounds that Māori theatre did not conform to the Greek theatre model.

1966 The Māori Theatre Trust was formed. They performed innovative works with Māori actors, mainly written by Pākehā. The Trust folded by the late 60s when its focus shifted to the ‘concert party’. Selwyn comments, “it was a catalyst for us to continue so that people like Bruce Stewart, Rowley Habib, Jim Moriarty, Tungia Baker, and a whole lot of those people could get involved” (Greenwood 2002: 21). Māori theatre practitioners began to realise that theatre was a good tool for political provocation.

1968 *Awatea* opened as a stage play on 4 September in the Wellington Town Hall and was Mason’s greatest success, “Beryl Te Wiata wrote: ... It has been written by a pakeha about the Maori, and such plays are a significant part of New Zealand culture. The old chants have been translated, the Maori arts are familiar and our mythology is well known, but *Awatea* has been written of Maori life as it is today; the author has lived among the Maori people and has the ability to present their life and problems” (Harcourt: 153).

1970 “we were emerging from the shadow of colonialism in both the writing and the performance of drama” (Harcourt: 1978: 7).

1972 132 years after the signing of the Treaty Ruth Ross, in her essay, ‘Te Tiriti o Waitangi: Texts and Tranlations’ translated and analysed the Māori text and in so doing demonstrated that the two texts said different things and pointed out that Māori had signed the Māori text.

1972 *Te Raukura – The Feathers of the Albatross*, by Harry Dansey, of English and Māori ancestry – Ngāti Tuwharetoa (Taupo) and Arawa (Rotorua), dedicated to his wife from Taranaki as a tribute to her people. First performed in 1973 at St Mary's Cathedral, Auckland. *Te Raukura* was the first play written by a Māori playwright. The second production was directed by Brian Potiki¹⁶ in Wellington, 1975.

Te Raukura precedes the Māori Land March by three years and was written eight years before Thompson's *Songs to the Judges*. It has a substantial amount of text in te reo Māori and focuses on Parihaka, Te Whiti-o-Rongomai and the prophet Te Ua, who founded the Hau Hau faith. The play includes the Parihaka poi, which was not easy to perform, not being for entertainment but a serious performance inter-related to history. I witnessed this poi at Parihaka, where the older women hit themselves on the forehead with the poi, it is a most distressing performance to observe, where the physical pain of the ancestors is made manifest in the present. "Let me be brief. The Pakeha came. The missionary taught us. The settler arrived desiring land. Our fathers would sell no more. There was war. We lost. They took the land as punishment for rebellion ... 340,000 acres in North Taranaki, 560,000 acres in South Taranaki, Ngāti Ruanui, Nga Rauru ... This war, the first war, ended in 1861" (Dansey: 2). Dansey notes that sections of *Te Raukura* were first written in Māori and later translated into English, because, "Though it was tempting to leave whole sequences in Maori untranslated, this might have appeared pretentious and was resisted. Nevertheless not all have been translated" (xi). By using this technique of writing in the indigenous language and then translating into English, the rhythms of the Māori language have been retained in the colonial language, in an undermining of the major language¹⁷, 'a word with a sideways glance' a 'loophole'. Being bilingual, Māori writings conceived in the 'monoglotic' (coined by Bakhtin) world of English are an interplay between two languages. Deleuze and Guattari label this 'minor literature', where the oppressed write in the language of the oppressor, in the major language to express themselves, and as a form of protest. Plays written in English, but informed by te reo Māori create a national distinctiveness. This English is composed with Māori rhythms underlying it, with different qualities to English written in a monoglotic language. Dansey also created a convention where actors would begin a dialogue in Māori and then continue in English.

1970s Māori were becoming urbanised, with increasing numbers of young Māori living in Wellington and Auckland, "In 1960, the Hunn report had for the first time

¹⁶ Brian Potiki. Māori actor and playwright. Co-founder with Jill Walker of the theatre group the Travelling Tuataras.

¹⁷ See Deleuze and Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*.

1970s Māori were becoming urbanised, with increasing numbers of young Māori living in Wellington and Auckland, “In 1960, the Hunn report had for the first time documented Maori inequalities in income, health, housing and education. A decade later these inequalities were widening ... Maori men and youths were being convicted for crimes and imprisoned out of all proportion to their numbers in the total population” (Renwick: 5). Activist leaders Whina Cooper and Eva Rickard were gathering followers. In 1970 Dr Ranginui Walker, lecturer at the University of Auckland commented, “But I was also Maori. I inhabited a dual world of two social and cultural landscapes. As long as those two landscapes were kept discrete, I could shuttle back and forth between the two with ease as a bicultural person ... Then, in 1970, my life changed as career and community involvements put me at the interface of cultural politics between Maori and Pakeha” (Renwick: 6). Walker organised the Young Maori Leaders Conference which sparked the beginning of *Nga Tamatoa*, the young warriors activist group.

1970s The beginning of the Māori renaissance and the beginning of Māori theatre.

1973 Waitangi Day became Aotearoa New Zealand’s ‘national day’. Pākehā wanted a national identity and Māori wanted recognition of what was not honoured in the Treaty.

1975 The Land March, organised by Te Huinga Rangatahi, led by Dame Whina Cooper and her grandson with the full support of Māoridom. The march began at Te Haupa in the far North with 15 people and ended at Parliament Buildings, Wellington (the Southernmost part of the North Island) with 3000, as together Māori and Pākehā protested Māori land grievances. The slogan was, “Not One Acre More” and Cooper’s rallying call was:

No more lollies! We’ve been sucking the Pakeha lolly for one hundred and fifty years.

Look at what’s happened. Look at what we’ve got left.

Only two million acres. Yes that’s right. Two millions acres out of sixty million acres (Kouka 1999: 12).

The Land March awoke a spirit among Māori and for the first time many iwi stood side by side. It can be read as ‘environmental theatre’, as Roma Potiki argues, ‘If we view the Land March as a cultural procession or a kind of travelling play we would be able to see it as a form of drama encompassing a number of qualities; it has a spiritual base; it is collective in nature; providing the tangata whenua are respected,

anyone irrespective of race, age, disability or gender can have a part; the structure is determined by *kawa*, though it remains flexible; its energetic naturalism is the predominant form though elements of oratory, song, stylised movement, dance and monologue intertwine easily within this; the script avoids stereotypes; the accent is on teamwork; ... it combines elements found in both Theatre of the Oppressed and the Theatre of Liberation; audience participation is encouraged; like all good drama it contains conflict' (Potiki 1991: 9-10). The Land March along with other land protests in the 70s provoked and inspired political performances, for instance, *Maranga Mai* and *Songs to the Judges*, and gained media attention for the Māori renaissance.

1975 Parliament passed the Treaty of Waitangi Act which gave the Māori and English texts equal status.

1975 The Waitangi Tribunal was formed to, "hear Māori grievances, inquire into claims under the Treaty and to make recommendations to Parliament for their settlement" (Walker 1990: 212). However, the Treaty was still regarded by the majority of Pākehā with little interest. Sorrenson articulates the general atmosphere well, "New Zealanders over the years have made so much of the Treaty, as our founding document, as a charter for relations between Māori and Pākehā, that it cannot readily be forgotten or abandoned. It may be an albatross around the Pākehā neck, but for Māori it is their Magna Carta, their guarantee of their place in a country that has long been controlled by Pākehā ... Hopefully Pākehā and Māori New Zealanders will manage to talk to one another, instead of shouting past each other" (Sorrenson: 19-21). What Europeans have failed to recognise over the years is that it takes two to tango, two parties signed the Treaty and it was this document that guaranteed *tauiwi* their 'place in the sun', or right to live in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Waitangi Tribunal explained the Treaty as, "first and foremost a contract entered into by two sovereign entities. It is thus to be interpreted in ways appropriate to treaties between independent states. It is a treaty between a European nation and the leaders of an indigenous people and, unusually, it exists in the languages of the two parties ... it made us one country, but acknowledged that we were two people" (Renwick: 9).

1975 The World Council of Indigenous Peoples was formed. The creation of the Waitangi Tribunal coincided with an increase in international awareness of indigenous peoples. Māori concerns are part of an international historical experience along with Aborigines, Indians, Saami and other indigenous peoples who were joining together.

1977 *Death of the Land by Rore Hapipi*, produced by Te Ika-a-Maui Players. Set in *The Maori Land Court of New Zealand* it "protests the appropriation of Maori land

by the Pakeha justice system” (Potiki: 1991). In this play issues of importance to Maori were voiced. This was Agitprop Theatre¹⁸, basic, political, with a message.

1977 ‘Raymond Hawthorne, director of Auckland’s Theatre Corporate, claimed: ‘New Zealanders don’t want to see themselves on the stage ... I spend a good deal of my time carefully reading every New Zealand script that’s sent to me, but they’re just not good enough’ (Harcourt 1978: 9). The Editorial in the Wanganui Chronicle on 4 May stated, ‘In a country without a professional theatre (or the will to support one), Bruce Mason knew he would have to do it himself, or not at all. So he did it’.

1978 “As recently as 1978 ... Sir Keith Holyoake, had said: ‘The real significance of Waitangi Day lies, not so much in its commemoration of the declaration of British Sovereignty ... as in its symbolising of the equality between Maori and Pakeha being side by side, with each respecting the contribution the other is making to the enrichment of our nation ... Captain Hobson’s historic statement: “He iwi tahi tatou!” (We are all one people) stressed the symbolic significance of the treaty ... The best way to accomplish ... is to eliminate any form of distinction between Maori and Pakeha – without depriving any group of its culture” (Renwick: 8). Aotearoa New Zealand was locked into a political policy of assimilation, in a hybridity based on the Treaty.

1979 -1980 ‘guerrilla theatre’. Roma and Brian Potiki toured a performance entitled Maranga Mai which played at the same time as Thompson’s Songs to the Judges in Auckland. The two pieces had similar themes, but Mauranga Mai was focused on the five years of political protest from 1975 to the Waitangi Day protests of 1980. It was Agitprop Theatre with minimal set and little sophistication but with a strong political message, and mixed Māori performance forms with a Western influence of physical theatre. ‘the play was an open challenge to the ideology of ‘one people’ and a contradiction of the myth of New Zealand society as a racial utopia, there was an immediate overreaction by authorities ... Merv Wellington, the Minister of Education, was reputedly so angered by reports about the play that he asked the Manukau City Council to ban the Maranga Mai theatrical review group from all schools in its area. ... The overreaction of the critics was to the power of drama, however amateurishly presented, to raise the level of political consciousness over Maori grievances, as much as to the content of the play’ (sic) (Walker 1990: 226). The 70s saw a rise of Māori performance by and for Māori audiences, not performed in mainstream theatres, but on

¹⁸ “Agitprop – short for ‘Agitation and Propaganda’ – was theatre at its most primitive. There was nothing dramatic about this when it first began in the U.S.S.R. after the Revolution as a means of communicating news to a largely illiterate population” (Innes 1972: 23).

marae and in community centres and schools. This blossoming was later articulated in the name given to Jim Moriarty's performance group, Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu: The Blossoming Fruit Tree of our Sacred Grove. Kouka says of Māori theatre, 'In theatre we found a tool that was able to fluently express our ideas and our concerns, and it was all under Maori control – here was tino rangatiratanga in action – a medium of little cost, with the ability to communicate to many and yet keep the message pure. We had found a way' (Kouka 1999: 13).

1980 *Songs to the Judges* by Mervyn Thompson, performed at Maidment Theatre, Auckland, with themes of colonisation and political protest by Māori over land confiscations over 140 years. Both Mason and Thompson acknowledged that they were non-Māori writing on Māori themes, and supported Māori initiatives in playwriting and theatre.

1980 *Directions*, Rawiri Paratene, at Fortune Theatre, Dunedin.

1981 Sir David Beattie, the Governor General stated, "I am of the view that we are not one people, despite Hobson's oft-quoted words, nor should we try to be. We do not need to be."

1981 The Springbok Rugby Tour provoked the country, splitting it down the middle on racial terms. Not only Māori and Pākehā were divided, but husbands and wives and families broke apart. People in Aotearoa New Zealand were beginning to find a political voice and to stand by their convictions regardless of the consequences. Many Pākehā protested against racism in South Africa but were blind to it in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1982 *Outside In* by Hilary Beaton. Racial awareness is not explicit in the text with all the characters played by Pākehā actors, but statistically half of the prisoners would have been Māori, "To ignore this fact [in casting] is itself an act of invisibilising and a covert form of racism" (Dale 1991: 171).

1983 *Patu*, a documentary film by Merita Mita about the Springbok Tour.

1983 The Depot Theatre, Alpha Street, Wellington, was established to present New Zealand works and support Māori and Polynesian work. The first production, *Out in the Cold* by Greg McGee, was directed by Colin McColl, a Pākehā director, who has successfully collaborated with and supported Māori playwrights and actors. "I would like to acknowledge Taki Rua – The Depot Theatre ... for their consistent and

continued support of Maori and Pacific Island theatre over many years. The Depot has been there for us since 1983, and its policy specifically includes the development of Maori theatre works. This theatre has provided the main base for virtually all Maori productions in the Wellington region since its founding” (Potiki 1991: 12).

1983 Shuriken by Vincent O’Sullivan with an intercultural cast (Japanese, Māori, Pākehā) based on a WWII Japanese Prisoner of War camp near Wellington, where 50 Japanese soldiers were killed in unusual circumstances. “There are few stories where there is such a dramatic meeting between East and West ... but always a Maori song must be used ... to convey that third dimension in the play, and that other culture which was perhaps as far removed from pakeha New Zealanders as it was from the Japanese” (O’Sullivan: Author’s Note).

1983 Te Ohu Whakaari, Māori cooperative initiated by Rangimoana Taylor, one of the first Māori graduates from Toi Whakaari, the New Zealand Drama School. They worked as professionals touring in schools and on marae, with an emphasis on devised work which included storytelling and physical theatre.

1984 Groundwork by Renee. Set during the Springbok Tour of 1981 it integrates lesbian politics and ‘exposes long-established racial attitudes’, “You see you’re not dark because I’ve got ‘Spanish’ blood, it’s Maori see?” (Dale 1991: 170-71).

1984 Northland Youth Theatre, with Wiremu Davis as a member.

By the mid 1980s Māori performance had become a significant voice in Aotearoa New Zealand theatre. Greenwood argues, ‘it was Maori who took the initiative in theatre and in other arts in redefining and re-inscribing what it meant to live in New Zealand in the space between two cultures’ (Greenwood 2002: 29).

1980s Te Kohanga Reo, initiation of language nests for pre schoolers with total immersion in te reo Māori. The kindergartens began a major attempt at the saving and revival of Māori language. It is suggested that if a language is not the first language in the home of 50% of its speakers then it will die. Te reo Māori has fought against this statistic and is winning. From Te Kohanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori primary schools developed and total immersion in te reo Māori has been introduced at some high schools. Waikato University has a total immersion programme. This surge in Māori language is creating a larger audience for plays written and performed in te reo Māori.

1980 – 1985 Waitangi Day celebrations were confrontational, “the country seemed to be locked into an annual ceremony that pitted New Zealanders against each other when it should be bringing them together” (Renwick: 7). From 1986-89 the Labour Party shifted the celebrations to Wellington, and Māori were not so visible protesting on the streets, as hidden negotiating behind closed doors.

1985 Tutakitanga I Te Puna by Paul Maunder and Theatre of the Eighth Day. *The bicultural group Theatre of the Eighth Day, directed by Paul Maunder, experimented with ‘spatial iconic identity’ (Balme’s terminology¹⁹). Maunder had been a participant in actor training sessions with Grotowski and in the 60s the group worked with physical and vocal training, created performances influenced by Grotowski, utilised a documentary theatre form and the portrayal of historical events, through stylised choreography and the exploration of performance space and ritual, “The focus on ritual and spatial arrangements indicate that Maunder, together with his multiracial cast, was especially intent on welding the European aesthetic and Maori ritual traditions into a new kind of theatrical experience” (Balme 1999: 244). Roma Potiki was involved in the first production of Theatre of the Eighth Day and argues that, “At the same time, there is always some alienation of the Maori audience, because in the work there comes through a suspicion as to who is in control ... with the Theatre of the Eighth Day, Paul tried for a high degree of Maori involvement. He tried towards a bi-cultural form but I still think that he had an intellectualized Pakeha form that used Maori motifs, ritual concepts, politics. But it still wasn’t a Maori form. You see, to me to find a Maori form, a Maori has to find it” (Balme 1999: 245).*

1985 The Waitangi Tribunal was established. “In 1985 the Waitangi Tribunal received a massive increase in jurisdiction. The Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act, passed by David Lange’s Labour government, authorized the Tribunal to investigate claims that the Crown had breached principles of the Treaty at any time since it was negotiated in 1840” (Sorrenson: 14). This amendment was passed at the same time as new government financial policy to sell off state assets. Renwick says of the Tribunal that, “All its reports turn on the continuing tension between sovereignty and te tino rangatiratanga” (10). The loophole in the language of translation of the Treaty began to enforce a bicultural government policy to honour the word of the Treaty. Māori turned to Article Two of the Treaty to seek lawful ways of resistance to the policies of the dominant culture, and especially for the guarantee of tino rangatiratanga over their land and taonga (treasures). Article Two is the base for bicultural and Māori theatre, as a strategy for preserving the taonga (treasures) of te reo (language) and culture.

¹⁹ Balme, Chris. *Decolonizing the Stage*.

1985 the Homosexual Law Reform Bill was passed and two Shakespeare films *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merchant of Venice* were banned from the Wellington Film Festival because they were sexist and racist.

1986 Ngati Pakeha: He korero Whakapapa, Theatre of the Eighth Day *performing mainly on marae*.

1987 Paul Reeves, the first Māori Governor General, stated, “Te Tiriti o Waitangi has given us a framework for this nation, a framework in which two cultures struggle to grow and develop. So whether we like it or not, the Treaty belongs to the heritage of all New Zealanders ... Maoris must be able to develop their culture and institutions just as non-Maoris have done, and to use the resources of the nation for that purpose” (Renwick: 9). At this time in the mid 80s there is a shift away from the government policy of assimilation to that of separate development and a recognition of difference between Pākehā and Māori.

1987 Queen’s Counsel David Baragwanath stated that, “New Zealand history after 1860 is such an accumulation of statutes and executive acts in breach of the principles of the treaty that the Crown cannot properly assume that in transferring any particular asset it will not act inconsistently with those principles” (Orange 1987: 254).

1987 *The Healing Arch, the collection of Mason’s five Māori plays was finally published, “Bruce Mason felt that his exploration of Maori themes in this sequence of five plays was one of his most important undertakings. In it he attempts to come to terms with a native people during a century of foreign occupation, and with a transplanted European population during a century of settlement” (The Healing Arch: back cover). The volume included: Hongi, The Pohutukawa Tree, The Hand on the Rail, Swan Song, and Awatea. Mason wanted to call it The Broken Gourd, but this was not supported by the publishing company.*

1988 *Roimata by Riwia Brown. This play is a significant change in the focus of Māori playwrighting, away from overt political Agitprop to a love story.*

1989 *Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu was formed by the combining of Te Ohu Whakaari and Te Ika a Maui. The new theatre group, led by Jim Moriarty, has focused on community work, touring plays into schools with themes of drug abuse, sex education and violence, and working in prisons.*

1989 He Ara Hou, theatre company founded by Roma Potiki.

Late 1980s Ahorangi Genesis, Chris Winitana, toured the North Island with a performance in te reo Māori.

Jim Moriarty and Rangimoana Taylor coined the term Marae Theatre in a bid to move away from the form of European theatre traditions. The basic premise was that the European concept of theatre become second to Māori kawa and tikanga and the kaupapa was entirely Māori.

1990 International Festival of the Arts in Wellington. The Depot became a marae for three weeks, with Māori kawa and tikanga the working basis for the performances. Visitors were welcomed with a karanga and asked to remove their shoes when entering the theatre/marae. The audience had an opportunity to reply at the end of the performances. The dominant language was te reo Māori.

1990 Broken Arse by Bruce Stewart, was workshopped at Tapu Te Ranga Marae²⁰, and directed by Rangimoana Taylor. "Broken Arse was one of the successes of the 1990 International Festival of the Arts. Set in a prison it is a powerful and disturbing examination of the effects of racial tension and institutional dehumanisation." The characters are comprised of four Pākehā and five Māori in a bicultural cast, with haka an intrinsic form,

TU: By the way, who did your family buy the farm from?

HENRY: No one. I think they were the first owners (Stewart 1991: 25).

1990 Don Selwyn's The Merchant of Venice (translated into Maori by Pei Te Hurinui Jones) for Te Kohanga Māori Arts Festival.

1990 Whatungarongaro by Te Aro Hou, a collective based in Paekakariki, directed by Roma Potiki and John Anderson. Predominantly Māori, but negotiating bicultural issues the group worked in the community conducting workshops with unemployed, and with women's groups, among others. The work was devised, non-naturalistic, utilising film, fantasy and martial arts intermixed with traditional Māori waiata and chant in te reo. Toured in New Zealand and Australia.

1991 Michael James Manaia by John Broughton. Solo performance by Jim Moriarty, directed by Colin McColl, one of the leading pieces of theatre in Aotearoa. First

²⁰ Bruce Stewart founder and builder of Tapu Te Ranga urban marae in Island Bay, Wellington.

performed at Downstage in Wellington. It toured to the Edinburgh Festival in 1992. The work featured a bicultural collaboration between the director and the actor, with the actor being of both Māori and Pākehā descent.

1991 *He Reo Hou*, the first collection of plays by Māori playwrights: Rore Hapipi, *Death of the Land*; Hone Tuwhare, *In the Wilderness Without a Hat*; Rena Owen, *Te Awa I Tahuti*; Riwia Brown, *Roimata* and John Broughton, *Te Hara*. *Death of the Land* was written in 1975 but not published until 1991, sixteen years after it was written. It was not the first Māori play but was one of the first to receive wide recognition. In *The*

Wilderness Without A Hat, 1977, was a 'syncretic' work, including the ritual of a *tangi* within Western theatre conventions. Māori writers began to write for a Māori audience, "Most of our playwrights are activists of one kind or another, with a significant number having been involved in protest actions. Indeed all of the plays in this volume have elements of protest in them, some more markedly than others ... Maori theatre can be seen as *tino rangatiratanga* in action. By that I mean it is a visible claiming of the right to control and present our own image and material in the ways we deem most suitable, by using self-determined processes" (Potiki 1991: 10). These early plays negotiate between a European theatre tradition and Māori ceremony, but all have *whanau* (family) relationships at the core, and are based on a Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy). "I have watched a lot of theatre practitioners of the '70s and '80s disappear down the vortex of economic disenfranchisement ... Unless the New Zealand government ... supports the development of Maori theatre now we will all be impoverished. People's culture is a measure of the development of human values in any society" (Potiki 1991: 13).

1991 All has changed. A widespread funding crisis has affected the country's theatres, "Governments that are penny-wise proud of their housekeeping, inevitably become culture-foolish as they demand cash returns for every dollar of artistic subsidy invested" (Black 1991: 3-5).

1991 Renee interviewed by Lisa Warrington²¹ :

WARRINGTON: Do you think there's a future for theatre in New Zealand?

RENÉE: Someone said to me, what on earth are you writing New Zealand drama for? There isn't any drama in New Zealand. Can you imagine? Well, no one can say that now (Warrington 1991: 70).

²¹ Lisa Warrington, Senior Lecturer in Theatre Studies, University of Otago.

1991 *Mauri Tu* by Hone Kouka, first produced by Lisa Warrington at Allen Hall Theatre, University of Otago. It was Kouka's first published play, a solo work written by and for a Māori actor, and was the first volume in the Aoraki Press Theatre Series who at that time made a commitment to publish Māori texts for the theatre in either te reo Māori or English. "In 1990 I read a newspaper report concerning the Francis Shaw court case. The article centred on a plea by the young man to have his case heard on the Marae, following Maori protocol, and the ensuing controversy about Maori and the mono-cultural ... MAURI TU" (Kouka 1992: ix). Debates about justice in a Pākehā court or on the mārae are still continuing. Kouka's response to a court case puts *Mauri Tu* in a line of descent from Buchner's *Woyzeck* and Thompson's *Songs to the Judges*, among others.

1991 "At its best Maori theatre is a politicised form of self-awareness that goes ... into the area of the human heart ... Maori theatre should have the power and conviction to both disturb, heal and celebrate" (Potiki 1991: 60).

1992 The Sealords Fishery agreement between Māori and the Crown and the controversy that this generated.

1992 *Taku Mangai* by Wiremu Davis and his theatre group Te Hina Marama.

1992 The Depot changed its name to Taki Rua Depot.

1993 The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 29 reads: "Indigenous peoples are entitled to the recognition of the full ownership, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual property" (O'Regan: 23).

1994 Taki Rua Depot changed its name to Taki Rua. Taki Rua is the name of a weaving pattern that means to go in twos, and refers to the bicultural kaupapa of the theatre. "They [the Taki Rua collective] wanted to produce Māori theatre in a professional way by getting Pākehā practitioners to collaborate with them" (Mere Boynton, collaborator Taki Rua Theatre, interview with Lilicherie McGregor, 1997).

1994 Te Roopu Whakaari, Taki Rua's own theatre company established.

1994 *Nga Tangata Toa* by Hone Kouka. First performed at Taki Rua Theatre, Wellington, 25 May. Based on Ibsen's Norwegian nationalist saga *The Vikings at Helgeland*, it overlays a European myth onto a colonial past in Aotearoa. It is a bicultural performance, set on a marae and Taki Rua was endowed for the performance

as a marae. It is syncretic theatre, mixing both Māori ritual and Western performance forms.

1994 *Once Were Warriors* – film. This is not ‘theatre’ but it reached a wide Māori audience and opened an unknown world to many Pākehā. I heard comments from Māori that the film was just like their own lives and they identified strongly with the roles, whilst comments from many Pākehā were of disbelief that things ‘like that’ happened in Aotearoa New Zealand. Based on a novel by Alan Duff, the screenplay is by Riwia Brown.

1994 *The Debate* by Riwia Brown, based on the Treaty of Waitangi.

1994 Especially since this time of mid 1994 the Treaty of Waitangi has been under stress, seen by Māori as a valid document and as never having been honoured as an equal partnership. This was brought to the fore with Māori making a unified protest against the Crown Proposals for the Settlement of Treaty of Waitangi Claims, known as the ‘fiscal envelope’ with a \$1 billion cap, and known in Māori as ‘kopaki putea’. The settlement was officially proposed by the National Government Prime Minister Jim Bolger on 8 December 1994 and was rejected by hui throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. Underlying the rejection were Māori concerns with unemployment of Māori, the slowness of the process of claims with the Waitangi Tribunal and failure of Crown policies in regard to access to surplus Crown lands (cc Gardiner: 12).

1995 Subsequent land occupations by Māori protesters - Moutoa Gardens land occupation in Wanganui; an occupation at the Waikato campus; and at Lake Waikaremoana.

1995 *Whaea Kairau* by Apirana Taylor. Based on Brecht’s *Mother Courage*.

1995 Wira Gardiner in *Return to Sender* details the events at Waitangi in depth, when he was a senior public servant for *Te Puna Kokiri*,

No one expected the chaos and disruption that occurred at Waitangi on 6 February 1995. What happened on that day was as much a surprise to the elders as to everyone else. The presence of small police numbers indicated that they certainly did not expect anything out of the ordinary ... On that occasion in 1994 Te Kawariki chose Mike Smith ... to speak for them. In his speech Smith criticised the Government’s Treaty intentions and told ministers, ‘You will not be able to buy us off for 30 pieces of silver.’ When he had finished speaking he

walked towards Prince Charles, the principal guest, and handed him a copy of the 1835 Declaration of Independence (Gardiner: 14-15).

In 1995 Hone Harawira leader of *Te Kāwariki*, the northern protest movement, had requested that they hold a three day seminar and were given permission to run a hui 4-6 February at Waitangi. Harawira sent out a letter to protesters entitled The Crown's Treaty Settlement Policy "The Final Solution" which made implicit references to Nazi Germany and Jews. This was an emotive document making comparisons with black South Africans and also charged those who upheld the Government's policies as being 'The Niggers'. "Those Māori for whom cutting a deal with the Crown has been a sweet number. Those people are traitors and sell-outs. They are the ones who sold the Sealords Deal to our people and picked up a cool million bucks for their treachery.' It went on to claim, 'Those who support the Crown Treaty Proposals seek to condemn the rest of us to a future where our mana, our wairua and our rangatiratanga will be just footnotes in history.' It exhorts the 'faithful' to prepare for battle. 'As we prepare to fight against the Crown Proposals we must also expose the treachery within our ranks'" (Gardiner 1996: 17).

There was a strong angry mood building up in Māori circles to the 6 February 1995. The unexpected protest and anger that was unleashed were a surprise to Pākehā and their reaction was, I think, partly due to fear, that they felt physically vulnerable on the marae at Waitangi, if Māori had chosen to be physically violent. I believe that the events were well controlled by Māori protesters, in not letting the anger get out of control, beyond the symbolic protests of stamping on the flag, spitting and jeering. The official party of Government officials and guests were kept waiting at the entrance to the marae at Waitangi by a powhiri for the protesters. Te Kāwariki timed this, and it delayed the entrance of the manuhiri by 40 minutes. Protesters were all around the marae ātea²². Tame Iti speaking for the Tangata Whenua was outrageous and fired up the protesters against the manuhiri. When it came time for the manuhiri to speak they could not be heard above the jeering and did not even try to keep to their prepared notes. John Turei, the Prime Minister and the German Ambassador were booed; and the American Ambassador left the grounds. Hinewhare Harawira spat at the Governor General, "I suppose the most amazing thing that happened was that as we sat down to lunch and composed ourselves the protesters came into the same marquee to eat. Talk about the lions and lambs sitting down together! It was vintage Gilbert and Sullivan" (Gardiner 1996: 26). In the afternoon the protesters marched onto the Treaty Grounds, breaking security, and pulled down the New Zealand flag.

²² Marae ātea, the outdoor gathering space in front of the whare nui.

1995 *Māori Season*, at Taki Rua, founded by Mere Boynton who was programme manager. It toured annually into schools and Kohanga Reo.

1995 *Kilimogo Productions*, theatre collective in Te Waipounamu (South Island) working on Māori and bicultural theatre. Founded in 1995 by Hilary Halba, Rangimoana Taylor (Ngati Porou), Cindy Diver (Kai Tahu) and Awatea Edwin (Kai Tahu), 'Our mutual aim was to create an on-going structure through which quality, innovative Maori and bi-cultural theatre and performance could be presented in the lower half of Te Waipounamu' (Halba: 7). Edwin said that their kaupapa is to tell southern stories and to use southern actors.

1996 *This Other Eden* directed by Elric Hooper²³, by Michaelanne Forster²⁴.

1996 *Irirangi Bay* by Riwia Brown, directed by Murray Lynch. The play has a film noir style and is melodramatic with a love theme.

1996 *Waiora* by Hone Kouka. Commissioned and performed for the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts, at Downstage Theatre. Set in 1965, about the migration of a Māori whanau (family) it is partly autobiographical. 1965 was still a time when the loss of te reo Māori was a possibility. Boyboy is strapped at school for speaking Māori and his father forbids him to speak te reo at home. However, Waiora makes a stand in relation to te reo and Kouka leaves much of the Māori text untranslated. Waiata, haka and tangi are part of the form in a syncretic theatre mix.

"Since 1840, despite the promise of the Treaty to protect Māori, their land and other resources, they had lost some 95% of their land and most other resources. Despite enjoying the rights and privileges of British subjects, which the Treaty also promised, they had been caught on the lower socio-economic rungs of New Zealand society" (Sorrenson: 2). Waitangi Day (6 February) is a national holiday in Aotearoa New Zealand, but it is not seen as a day for celebration by many Māori, who do not wish to celebrate 160 years of colonisation and marginalisation in which time the Treaty has not been honoured. In relation to its legal force, "The Treaty does not limit the law-making capacity of Parliament, but imposes moral obligations on the Crown ... Neither the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi nor its principles are, as a matter of law, a restraint on the legislative supremacy of Parliament" (Te Puni Kokiri: 17).

²³ Artistic Director of the Court Theatre, Christchurch.

²⁴ Playwright commissioned to write *This Other Eden* by the Court Theatre.

However, “‘The duty of the Crown is not merely passive, but extends to active protection of Maori people in the use of their lands and waters to the fullest extent practicable’. These words are full of implication. They are legal concepts that are part of the very fabric of judicial discourse in the courts of the English speaking world of which New Zealand is a member. They reverse assumptions and arguments which during the previous 100 years had dismissed the Treaty of Waitangi as a legal nullity. The Treaty is still not part of statute law but it is now being used as an aid to the interpretation of statute law” (Renwick: 10).

1996 *A Christmas Wish* by Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu, *prison theatre directed by Moriarty*.

1997 Taki Rua gave up their theatre building and became a production company – to tour plays. *Insufficient funding had meant that the performers spent the majority of their time administering the running of the theatre to keep it financially sound and did not have the time to rehearse and perform their own work. I interviewed Mere Boynton while I was participating in the Magdalena Aotearoa inaugural meeting and attended the final meeting of Taki Rua in Alpha Street, which was also attended by Charles Royal²⁵ who spoke about the Whare Tapere²⁶ and the possibility of building a permanent performance space on a marae.*

1997 *Purapurawhetu* by Briar Grace-Smith at Downstage, *toured to Canada and Greece in 2000.*

1997 Magdalena Aotearoa²⁷ founded by Sally Rodwell and Madeline McNamara, Wellington. *A bicultural organization from the start, it later split into two discrete branches, Māori (Te Koka) and Pākehā, working alongside each other. Madeline McNamara has devised and acted in a performance entitled ‘Performing the Treaty’. In an interview with me she said of her work, “I wanted to address the fact that there was very little original ensemble based work from a Pākehā point of view that addressed issues of the Treaty ... I wanted to have as our major inspiration the Treaty of Waitangi and the Declaration of Māori Independence” (2000).*

²⁵ Royal, Te Ahukaramū Charles. *Te Whare Tapere: Towards a Model for Māori Performance Art*. PhD dissertation. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington, 1998.

²⁶ Whare Tapere, Māori building especially for performance, no longer in existence.

²⁷ Magdalena Aotearoa is a branch of The Magdalena Project, founded by Jill Greenhalgh in Wales in 1986, an international network of women performers.

There was a Pakeha/Tauiwi Treaty Education Workers Conference in Auckland, the first of its kind for a long long time and I attended that as a representative of Magdalena Aotearoa and I let everybody know about it including Te Koka and then Pare Potuku said "I'd be interested in coming". So I said, great, let's go together from Magdalena Aotearoa, as we do. I was also invited to do a performance so I said let's do a performance together then. We took as our starting point the whole attitude of suspicion and mistrust, around the Pakeha conference, and the Māori asking can I come? And Pākehā responses like: she's spying on us. We created a comic piece around that. It was all about making the audience feel safe to laugh about what we were going to be doing which was quite taboo breaking. We basically did a 25 minute set of taboo breaking skits that really brought the house down on the Treaty Conference. The journey of Magdalena Aoteroa in terms of our bicultural position, was from the very beginning linked to our establishment and administration; the first festival; consultation and sharing with Tangata Whenua; inviting participation on the trust; including the Treaty in our Aims; the Newsletter; the logo; sharing resources; employing a Māori co-ordinator. ... In the same time as creating the work, there is the ongoing structural relationship that we have as Magdalena Aotearoa and its going well, but it is always problematic, it is always a situation where very easily mistrust can come in and goodwill can be sort of turned around. It can be still going forward, but we do go back, and you have to keep assessing all the time and keeping what is really important in front of you (Interview McGregor and McNamara: 2000).

In contemporary society Treaty Workshops are held frequently, being run separately for Māori and Pākehā participants. They are situations where people confront their racism, and identity politics. But, whilst Pākehā may express their support for decolonisation by participating in the workshop, in the workshop I presented a session at, I witnessed a paternal attitude, where Pākehā still wanted to control the decision making for Māori, in for instance, health care.

1997 Flight of the Albatross by Riwia Brown, filmscript, prize for Best Children's Feature at Berlin Film Festival 1997.

1998 Songs to the Judges by Mervyn Thompson, directed by Lilicherie McGregor at Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae, Waikato Museum and Parihaka.

1998 Watea, Kia Maumahara, by Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu, prison performance.

2000 October, an exhibition on Parihaka was mounted at the City Gallery in Wellington by Roma Potiki. In an interview with me Potiki stated that in the past songs about Parihaka had been recorded and people from other iwi and Europeans had learnt these songs, but that they were not always rendered correctly, and now the caretakers of Parihaka have stipulated that they do not want anything to do with Parihaka recorded or given out, as the place to learn is on the marae.

In recent years government moves towards decolonisation and honouring the Treaty have tended to happen as they have seen themselves under threat. In 2000 a leading article in the *NZ Listener* picked up on the racial tensions in the country, “The government’s ‘Closing the Gaps’ policy might backfire if white New Zealand becomes any more disenchanted with perceived special treatment for Maori the extension of the Treaty of Waitangi into all areas of national life. Opinion polls and talkback debates alike suggest that we are again at the racial crossroads” (Oct 28-Nov 3: 19-22). What was realised statistically at least over a decade ago was that, “The age of the Maori and Pacific Island population is incredibly young compared to non-Maori. If we don’t get this young group in our community right in terms of what they can contribute at the high level that’s going to be demanded in the workforce, we will be in real trouble as a nation. It’s an economic investment we have to face up to” (Love: 22 *Listener* 2000). What is being expressed by Love²⁸ is that the percentage of population under 25 years is much higher for the Māori and Pacific Island population than for the Pākehā population. There are going to be huge racial ructions if steps to honour the Treaty of Waitangi have not been (or are not) implemented.

Frequently the meaning of bicultural theatre since the late 1990s has been a working process/rehearsal that follows Māori tikanga and incorporates Māori performance forms into the performances, but without the formality of a powhiri, “Today some theatre productions continue to follow strict tikanga, with karanga and all the elements of powhiri. There is a feeling though, among many practitioners, that they have moved past the need to illustrate their culture and that for the audience the welcome is a given – therefore subtler ways are used. Mihimihi are in the programme” (Kouka 1999: 16).

2001 *Ihi Frenzy*, Royal New Zealand Ballet and Te Matārae i Orehu²⁹,

²⁸ Ngatata Love was a chief executive of *Te Puna Kokiri*.

²⁹ Te Matārae i Orehu, formed in 1994 by the late Irirangi Tiakiawa. Have been national champions of the Aotearoa Traditional Māori Performing Arts Festival and represented Aotearoa New Zealand internationally. Their performance in *Ihi Frenzy* was based on the Māori creation myth.

Choreographed by Mark Baldwin and Wetini Mitai-Ngatai featuring the music of Split Enz³⁰. The performance forms of kapa haka and ballet were kept discreet, with the Māori performance at the beginning followed by that of the ballet company, with both groups on stage in the finale.

2001 Footprints/Tapuwae ... Return of the Native, a bicultural opera, conceived and directed by Peter Falkenberg in collaboration with Taiporoutu Huata, for Free Theatre, Christchurch. Music and text based on Richard Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung with Māori mythical elements.

2002 Tangata Whai Rawa o Weniti: The Maori Merchant of Venice film version of Pei Te Hurinui Jones' text from the 1940s, directed by Don Selwyn, national tour of New Zealand playing on marae and in theatres, invited to be shown at The Globe in London.

2002 Woman Far Walking, directed by Nancy Brunning³¹, text by Witi Ihimaera³², a Taki Rua Production, national tour. The narrative is told by Tiri, born on the day the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. A mapping of New Zealand culture over 162 years.

For a detailed whakapapa of Māori playwriting see Kouka's Introduction in *Ta Matou Mangai*, from which I have drawn elements of this history of bicultural theatre, "We have a whakapapa in theatre now, it means we have a tree with deep roots and spreading branches. Who knows how this tree will grow. That is the most exciting prospect of all" (Kouka 1999: 28).

The above historical interweaving of the social and political manipulations of the Treaty with bicultural theatre performance emphasises Boal's claim that theatre is political and is a 'weapon',

³⁰ *Split Enz*, New Zealand band from 1972-1984, Tim and Neil Finn were members who have pursued solo careers in music.

³¹ Ngati Ruakawa and Tuhoe. She won Best Actress at the Nokia New Zealand Film Awards in 1999 for her lead in *What Becomes of the Brokenhearted?*

³² Descended from East Coast tribes of the North Island. He was the first Māori writer to publish a short-story collection (*Pounamu*, Pounamu, 1972) and novel (*Tangi*, 1973). Professor of English at the University of Auckland. *Woman Far Walking*, his first play, was commissioned by the NZ Festival 2000.

traditions of Western theatre and Māori performing arts have two separate strands of development, but have key historical moments when they have met.

Biculturalism

What do we mean by the word bicultural? Is it two cultures developing side by side, acknowledging each other but not engaging in each other's culture? Or, does it mean to be able to move with ease in either culture, being able to speak both languages and having knowledge of social protocol for both cultures? Or, actively participating in the communities of both cultures? We have signs in public places in Aotearoa New Zealand in both Māori and English, does that make us bicultural? Where does multiculturalism fit into the scenario? In the next section I set out various viewpoints on how these questions are seen by people both Māori and Pākehā as a grounding upon which to base my research on bicultural theatre.

In the above history of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi and bicultural theatre the words bicultural and hybridity are used to define the different stages that Aotearoa New Zealand has moved through in its relationship of negotiating a colonised land. However, the word bicultural means different things to different people and I now attempt a definition, or present different views, followed by my own working philosophy for the project. The Treaty means that the people of Aotearoa New Zealand are continually engaging with the relationship that it promises, "the treaty is about a

relationship. It's about how different peoples can live alongside each other and in peace" (Prime Minister Helen Clark: 1 July 2002).

Although there was a Treaty signed between two peoples, the European imperative was on creating 'one people, one culture'. It was a monocultural world with, "one language, one education system, one law" (Ritchie: 9). When I was growing up in the 1950s my parents believed this ideology: that we were all one people, we were all the same, and we all had equality. My family lived in a Pākehā suburb, in Christchurch; there were no Māori kids at my school, but I had visited the neighbourhood marae with my class, although my parents had never been onto a marae. Even though a bicultural treaty had been signed between Māori and British, it was utilised (through policies of assimilation) as a tool to facilitate colonisation and devalue the culture of the indigenous people, almost eliminating their language, culture and religion. In 1992 Ritchie stated that,

we will not easily achieve an authentic bicultural society unless everyone who wants to be involved does go through their own personal process of growth and understanding ... The tide has turned. We face a future in which Maori people will assert their rightful place in this society, with or without non-Maori help ... Between their world and the majority culture we also must fashion the bicultural world of inter-connections and common pathways and understandings, but we will not be successful in this until the Maori world is respected, is resourced, is in good health and strength, and is in a true state of equity (Ritchie: 10-11).

Since the Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1985, the New Zealand government has proposed various perspectives on biculturalism:

The Ministerial Advisory Committee in its report, *Puao-Te-Ata-Tu* considered that biculturalism was ‘the appropriate policy direction for race relations in New Zealand’ and ‘the essential pre-requisite to the development of a multi-cultural society’. In addressing the function of the Department of Social Welfare, the committee interpreted ‘biculturalism as the sharing of responsibility and authority for decisions with appropriate Maori people’. We perceive a social and cultural partnership here – not separatism.

Biculturalism involves understanding and sharing the values of another culture, as well as understanding and/or preserving another language and allowing people the choice of the language in which they communicate officially.

Biculturalism also means that an institution must be accountable to clients of all races for meeting their particular needs according to their cultural background, especially, in the present case, Maori (Rangihau *et al.* 1986: 19-20).

This interpretation of what biculturalism might be includes seeing it as a step towards a multicultural society, not an end in its own right. This in itself is a political minefield, where it is often argued that to give the same privileges or recognition to bicultural and multicultural culture does not recognise the tangata whenua, the first people of the land.

Nine years later, in 1995 Ken Workman set out a framework to define biculturalism in the Public Service. His fourth stage in the continuum before tino rangatiratanga is a definition of what an active working biculturalism would mean in an institution:

He Urupare Tikanga a Rua: A Bicultural Response

- 1 Bicultural behaviour; all staff are comfortable with Maori and Pakeha customs and rituals, and engage in behaviour appropriate to the circumstance.
- 2 “Maori” policy is defined and developed in its own right ... Consultation with, and participation by Maori is built into the management systems of the organization. Understanding of Maori and Treaty issues is incorporated into policies, internally audited, and compliance is rewarded.
- 3 Maori policy given equal consideration ... Commitment to all articles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Commitment to the development right of indigenous peoples. Bicultural development training for staff.
- 4 Treaty of Waitangi as a founding document ... A defined view of Maori self-determination and self-sufficiency, and the need for Maori development.

At the time of constructing his model Workman noted that it was, ‘not possible, at this time, to identify a government organization that has achieved bicultural responsiveness’, He urupare Tikanga a rua ” (Stokes: 10-11).

One government sector (the museums in Aotearoa New Zealand) has adopted a bicultural agenda but, “To date, the museum sector has not attained a common understanding of what the term ‘biculturalism’ means within the museum environment, despite an often strong philosophical commitment to the ‘principle’” (O’Regan: 8).

O’Regan states that whilst the Treaty of Waitangi has had its legal status and relevance considered in different ways, and whilst it has been consistently acknowledged by governments in the last ten years, “it would be wrong to suggest that there is yet a consensus as to what the Treaty means to New Zealand at either a local or national level” (16).

Despite its continued disregard by some within the country, the Treaty is increasingly looked to as underpinning the relationship between Māori (through iwi) and non-Māori (through the Crown). Seen by others as the founding document of New Zealand's nationhood, the Treaty is recognised by many New Zealanders as the source of the idea that biculturalism should be the fundamental basis for Aotearoa New Zealand society (O'Regan: 17).

In *Becoming Bicultural* James Ritchie³³ sets out his personal principles which guide him in his work between Māori and Pākehā. He acknowledges that, "It is not at all easy to learn to work collectively when one's culture and training have conditioned habitual responses in precisely the reverse direction ... This is my book, written for a Pakeha audience, but to promote Maori causes and purposes" (4). His definition of biculturalism is, "there are two predominant cultures here, not one. Pakeha culture (about which we know surprisingly little, anthropologically speaking) is dominant by power, history and majority. Maori culture is dominant by a longer history, by legacy and by its strength of survival and the passionate commitment of its people" (Ritchie: 6).

One of my questions when beginning this research was, how do non-Māori work in the world of Māori? How do I facilitate a bicultural performance about land ownership? This dissertation in part interrogates my personal path defining my values and ethics in my working relationship between two cultures. The Treaty of Waitangi established a partnership between Māori and British, however, there are different

³³ Ritchie is a well-known commentator on Māori affairs and tribal development over the last forty years in his role as Deputy Director of the Centre for Māori Studies and Research at the University of Waikato where he is also Foundation Professor of Psychology.

values or principles operating in the different cultures. Ritchie, from a Pākehā perspective, outlines a number of the values that relate to a Māori worldview. I include these values in Appendix I as a reference to underpin what I mean when I discuss the different value systems operating between the actors in *Songs to the Judges*, and principles that needed to be kept in mind when directing a bicultural production.

Endeavouring to understand a people's values is one way of gaining understanding of their culture and of how they make decisions and operate within society. For Māori there are some dominant values, which are difficult to take out of their context in the whole, but which are helpful for Pākehā to understand. The word Whanaungatanga, which is made up of the word for family (whānau) and extends out to include the tribe (iwi) and relationships between iwi. Kotahitanga relates to discussion and consensus. Manaakitanga concerns the importance of caring for others and the giving of hospitality. Wairuatanga implies the spiritual dimension. There is a divide between the value systems of both cultures and this was one of the first things to become manifest in our rehearsals of *Songs to the Judges*. The acknowledgment of this is important.

Biculturalism is most associated with a joining, an inter-relationship, but it can be a division, two separate developments. In this light, Richie calls for Kotahitanga (consensual discussion) as a bridge between the two cultures,

For over 150 years we have had a national ideal of biculturalism, however much the reality was not only inequality but cultural imperialism by the dominant Pakeha majority. But that is only part of the nation's story. Strong or feeble, there has always been the parallel and respectful coexistence of two historic cultures with an inter-culture – the one both Maori and Pakeha share. It is only as we start to examine, recognise and attend to the construction of the inter-culture that we can become secure with biculturalism, which does not, and need not, divide us ... Kotahitanga is, or can be, a bridge for both cultures (Ritchie: 96).

In thinking about biculturalism we are engaging with two cultures, but what is culture? How do we use the word culture in biculturalism? Culture is a word we use daily and assume that we all mean the same thing, but do we? Culture, can be the word we refer to when we think of high art, what is exhibited in galleries, museums or at the theatre. However, when we talk of culture in contemporary society it has become more common to associate the word with a social context. The word is part of our everyday vocabulary, for example, popular culture, the culture of gender, of poverty, of capitalism, and this is different from the use of the word by anthropologists, where it often refers to a way of life of a group of people who share a language and traditions. Ritchie argues that, “the real stuff of culture in any of its meanings is messy, confusing, paradoxical, ironical, unclear, allowing alternatives and interpretations on some occasions but not on others” (99). Ritchie further elaborates that he,

had to learn that there was no single unitary Maori culture of which all these were sub-forms or varieties, except in a very abstract intellectual sense. Yet all around me, then and now, are those who speak and act as though there were. Throughout the history of colonial contact, governments have tried to act as though Maori were, or might be made, a unitary political and social reality - a single culture. The Treaty of Waitangi assumes this ... There never was some

universal Maori hegemony which was shattered, broken or disrupted by colonial authority ... there was no Maori culture as such, only tribal cultures ... Who, then, does speak for Maori culture? Everyone who ascribes to Maori identity may, with some authority based on their personal rangatiratanga (100-103).

In questioning culture I am engaging with the discipline of Cultural Studies

which offers methods for discussing questions in relation to multicultural societies.

The British strand of the discipline has a Marxist influence and focuses on class, whilst American study is from a more ethnographic angle. The analysis of culture is a field in its own right with all the strands of interpretation and meaning that go with it.

Raymond Williams argues that, "The word, culture, cannot automatically be pressed into service as any kind of social or personal directive. Its emergence, in its modern meanings, marks the effort at total qualitative assessment, but what it indicates is a process, not a conclusion" (1995: 164). Said defines 'culture' in two ways, firstly, as practices of communication and representation. In *Culture and Imperialism* he concentrates attention on the novel as a means of forming imperial attitudes where, "The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (Said 1994: xiii). Said sees culture intimately linked with its aesthetic forms and quotes William Blake who also saw art and science as the cornerstones of empire, "Empire follows Art and not vice versa as Englishmen suppose" (Said 1994: 13).

Secondly, Said sees culture as society's 'reservoir of the best that has been known and thought' and that this leads to the society seeing culture as nation and a 'source of identity',

Culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that, as we see in recent 'returns' to culture and tradition. These 'returns' accompany rigorous codes of intellectual and moral behaviour that are opposed to the permissiveness associated with such relatively liberal philosophies as multiculturalism and hybridity. In the formerly colonized world, these 'returns' have produced varieties of religious and nationalist fundamentalism (Said 1994: xiv).

Said acknowledges that many colonised peoples seek nationalism and separatism in an effort to exert some independence and he claims that the only way to understand this is historically. However, he does not buy into an essentialist viewpoint believing that,

Neither culture nor imperialism is inert, and so the connections between them as historical experiences are dynamic and complex. My principle aim is not to separate but to connect, and I am interested in this for the main philosophical and methodological reason that cultural forms are hybrid, mixed, impure, and the time has come in cultural analysis to reconnect their analysis with their actuality (Said 1994: 15).

Biculturalism versus Multiculturalism

Since the 1970s there has been considerable debate within Aotearoa New Zealand as to whether we should focus on being a bicultural or a multicultural society. There are different political issues at stake between these two offers. Spoonley argues for biculturalism,

The relationship between the dominant Pakeha group and the Maori as tangata whenua needs to be renegotiated, especially in the light of the Treaty of Waitangi. It precedes and dominates all other political issues in this area and ought to be

addressed as a necessary first step ... Multiculturalism is a soft option politically. It emphasizes the plurality and diversity of cultures and often emphasizes the need for 'mutual tolerance' (1988: 104-105).

For many Māori issues of biculturalism need to be addressed before those of multiculturalism. Māori as the tangata whenua are waiting for their grievances to be dealt with in terms of resources and political and cultural representation, "For the Maori, this is the homeland: there is nowhere else to go. For this reason my focus will be on bicultural issues and questions" (Ritchie: 8).

From another perspective Andrew Sharp asks, why be bicultural? He argues that Māori claims to the Treaty of Waitangi and tangata whenua status are morally wrong, instead advocating multiculturalism as a policy for Aotearoa New Zealand ... "in the real world of human history, cultures are actually leaky vessels, created, renewed and transformed in endless contact with others" (1995: 118).

Michael King³⁴ in *Being Pakeha Now* claims to have moved through the phase of biculturalism,

Beyond the Treaty process, however, I no longer believe in the inevitability, or even the desirability, of a bi-cultural nation. The bi-cultural model served us well, and in particular served Maori well, when there were injustices to right and imbalances to correct – one could simply compare one culture with the other and ask if the scales were balanced. I doubt now, though, that most Maori and most Pakeha want to define themselves in simple bi-cultural terms. In recent decades, as a feature of their cultural renaissance, Maori have undertaken a massive shift back to tribal culture and identity ... For

³⁴ Michael King, one of Aotearoa New Zealand's leading historians and biographers, has written on Māori and Pākehā themes. His books include *Being Pakeha*, *Te Pūea* and *Maori: A Photographic and Social History*.

me, then, to be Pakeha on the cusp of the twenty-first century is not to be European; it is not to be an alien or a stranger in my own country. It is to be a non-Maori New Zealander who is aware of and proud of my antecedents, but who identifies as intimately with this land, as intensively and as strongly, as anybody Maori. It is to be, as I have already argued, another kind of indigenous New Zealander (1999: 237-9).

In the case of Aotearoa New Zealand the founding document can be read as a bicultural document that was implemented as a tool of colonialism. It is ironic that it has, in a postcolonial climate, been honoured by the government and turned around to become a tool of decolonisation. In many other countries the idea of biculturalism is a postcolonial idea, linked to decolonization and was not a colonial policy. The Treaty of Waitangi has created an interface, a borderland, where Māori and non-Māori continually re-evaluate their relationship. The Māori renaissance was a cultural revolution, and in terms of biculturalism, the opening of a dialogue through dialogical cultural action, to reconstruct society on a different power relationship based on talking to each other and not past each other. hooks claims that, “the colonizing forces are so powerful in this white supremacist patriarchy, it seems that black people are always having to review a commitment to a decolonizing political process that should be fundamental to our lives and is not” (1994: 47). Fanon described the process of decolonization as ‘the meeting of two opposed forces’ born of a violent struggle. The marginalised in Aotearoa New Zealand are struggling to decolonize and in so doing to make transformation in society.

In *Culture and Difference*³⁵ Darder argues that the politics of biculturalism do not support theories of hybridity, as biculturalism, in this instance, is seen as separate development with two cultures living parallel to each other, not intermixing. She exemplifies biculturalism as a political tool for marginalised people of colour to make a stand against cultural imperialism, racism and economic oppression utilising the politics of difference, claiming that the phenomenon of biculturalism is an experience of living in 'two-worldness or double consciousness' for the marginalised within the dominant culture.

Spoonley suggests that biculturalism requires the two groups to be aware of their own ethnic identity, and that this poses a problem for many Pākehā who do not feel as if they have a sense of cultural identity,

So Pakeha do and will continue to have, substantial difficulties with biculturalism, because it assumes that they realize their own ethnicity and feel sufficiently confident about this identity to react with others who are asserting their ethnic interests. Biculturalism also challenges Pakeha to examine their practices and institutions, and to transfer power to Maori (1995: 106).

Spoonley believes Pākehā have problems in identifying their own culture because as the dominant culture they are 'unmarked' and see their ways of doing things as 'natural' whereas the practices of minority cultures are often seen as 'unusual' or 'strange', "It is far from clear that the dominant Pakeha consciously see themselves as

³⁵ A collection of essays written by people of different cultures including: African American, Chicana, Asian American and Latino.

having a separate cultural identity, much less obligations as a partner in a bicultural future” (1995: 96). Spoonley’s statement raises the question, what is Pākehā? Which he has defined as, “the term of the colonized for the colonizers. Thus its reclamation by the postcolonial colonizers is indeed a political act; similar to, but significantly different from, the reclamation of terms of abuse (black, dyke) by oppressed identities” (1995: 98). For Europeans to identity as Pākehā is a political act,

a label that represents the politics of a fraction of the middle class. Its authenticity as a reflection of an emergent ethnicity is still unconvincing to many, but it is an important part of a binary politics – Maori/Pakeha – that renders biculturalism possible. For the moment, the political position of those who identify themselves as Pakeha, as partial and contested as it is, is a critical part of the post-colonial terrain in Aotearoa New Zealand (Spoonley 1995: 111).

Songs to the Judges in its exposition of colonial history, gathered from oral stories and newspaper reports, was giving Pākehā as well as Māori a sense of history from a marginalised perspective. This had a political imperative, as it is not possible for Pākehā to position themselves and have an opinion about the Treaty or land claims if they don’t know the histories from more than the dominant perspective.

The specificity of Aotearoa New Zealand is that it has a founding document, a Treaty signed between two peoples at the height of colonialism. In postcolonial times the call for Aotearoa New Zealand to be bicultural is a call to honour the Treaty and has led to monetary settlements and land restoration to the indigenous people. My definition of biculturalism when I began this dissertation, which included the practical

experience of directing Māori and Pākehā actors in a bicultural performance, was that for an individual to say they were bicultural they would be able to operate effectively and with ease within two different cultures (Māori and Pākehā), to speak both languages, and be familiar with the protocols of each culture. The majority of Pākehā have not made this crossing into biculturalism. However, it can be claimed that Māori have been bicultural since the arrival of Europeans on these shores, since they learnt English, were converted to Christianity, and over time were forced to operate economically, politically and socially within the European culture, as a matter of survival. Many however, have retained their Māori cultural heritage and operate on the border between or in both cultures. As a colonised people, Māori were forced to interact with the dominant culture, which bicultural process involves the social and psychological impact of living between two worlds. During the last 160 years, the Māori language was almost eradicated, and traditional religious beliefs undermined by the dominant culture's religion. This process led to Māori people being in a hybridized state, "Understanding this phenomenon [hybridization] requires that we acknowledge the deep historical consequences of being driven out of the dominant political space and relegated to a subordinate position" (Darder: 3).

The introduction of theories of hybridity is a shift from an historical to a theoretical analysis of biculturalism and leads to issues surrounding identity formation.

Postcolonial politics began to gain impetus in the 1970s and 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand but there were earlier manifestations, for instance Dick Scott's *Ask that Mountain* in 1954 which condemned the colonial action in Taranaki in the 1800s, "Here was a construction of a local history and its impact on Maori which addressed the oppressive nature of colonialism and deployed a then unpopular self-criticism" (Spoonley 1995: 99). Pākehā began to acknowledge their role as colonisers in the 1980s and cultural nationalism began to take a postcolonial, bicultural focus. But, is Aotearoa New Zealand postcolonial? Spoonley introduces the terms 'bifurcation and biculturalism', pointing out that in the 1980s bifurcation occurred between Māori and Pākehā. From this Pākehā undertook self-analysis about defining what it meant to be Pakeha,

Since Michael King's book³⁶ in 1985, there have been a series of statements or explorations of Pakeha as an identity in Aotearoa ... (see *Sites*, No. 13, 1986; McCaffery, 1987; Keith, 1988; Traue, 1990; Newnham, 1990; King, 1991). ... Equally, there has been a significant reaction which has attacked those who profess to being Pakeha and the politics of the 1980s which has produced such self-identification. In *Metro*, Carroll Wall (now du Chateau) offered a sustained attack in an article titled 'Te Pakeha. The Search for White Identity' (Wall, 1986). She asked, 'Is it still OK to be a whiteman? And then criticised the 'guilty liberals' who wanted to address matters of racism. Others such as Carter, the National MP for the Bay of Islands, have sought to ban the word Pakeha (see Walker, 1990) and journalist Frank Haden (1990) wrote a column titled 'Don't Try to Call Me Pakeha' (Spoonley 1995: 103).

Cultural construction of subjectivity

³⁶ *Being Pakeha*.

Identity. Identification. Sharing the Latin root, idem, for 'same', few terms in contemporary theory are so mutually vexing (Elin Diamond: 106).

When we talk about identity what do we mean? Do Māori and Pākehā understand this word in the same terms? From a Māori worldview, the idea of identity is often related to one's whakapapa, to one's genealogy which links one to an ancestor, ancestral canoe and place, back into the origins of mythology. This personal history creates a place from which individuals can speak, "Representation – or who has the right to speak for whom, and where – is central to issues of Maori identity at iwi, hapu and whanau level ... Maori identity ... is tied inextricably with whakapapa, genealogy, and customary uses and occupation" (Stokes, 36). This concept of identity is also acknowledged by Ntozake Shange³⁷, "Ntozake's definition of identity is both politically and humanly fascinating. She defines identity as knowing who and what you are regardless of where you are" (Lewis: 1993: 55). Shange here is flying in the face of Western theory, which in the twentieth century has moved the question of identity from that of origins, to that of socialisation, for instance by education, literature and environment, which in turn is effected through politics, and Marxist theory links this to ideology to see subjectivity as constructed, in terms of gender, race and class.

If, as Belsey argues, "The subject is constructed in language and in discourse and, since the symbolic order in its discursive use is closely related to ideology, in ideology" (Belsey 1985: 49) the forbidding of the Māori language in the education

³⁷ Black American performer and playwright.

system (the main Ideological State Apparatus, which conditions children to fit into society and instills social values) at the beginning of the twentieth century was influential in destroying Māori subjectivity. She claims that ideology helps create the belief that we are fixed subjects, of identifying with being, for example in terms of stereotypes, lazy, shy, generous, stupid, etc, and the belief that this is human 'nature'. Freire argues that, "For cultural invasion to succeed, it is essential that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority" (1972: 122). The loss of land, language, religion, and Māori culture, created a people with an inferiority complex. As Fanon posits the subjectivity of the colonised is altered by the coloniser, giving them an inferiority complex because of the loss of the indigenous culture (Fanon 1967: 18). The words of English were a tool of colonisation, as the New Zealand literary historian, Patrick Evans, provocatively states, "All colonies begin as words" (Lawson 1992: 155).

We form an idea of ourselves in relation to what we are not, what is 'other'. The other sex, race, class, those who are different.

It is within their polarities of white/black, masculine/feminine, hetero/homosexual, where one term is always dominant and the other subordinate, that our identities are formed ... But a cultural politics that can address difference offers a way of breaking these hierarchies and dismantling this language of polarity and its material structures of inequality and discrimination" (Rutherford: 10).

The politics of difference critiques essentialism and monoculturalism with its fear of the other. The dominant European culture, whilst claiming democracy and equal

opportunity, struggles, “to maintain the cultural, sexual and racial dichotomies of Self and Other to make and reproduce social formations of domination and inequality”

(Rutherford: 11).

Derrida’s writing provides a language with which to theorise difference, “As a philosopher he has attempted to deconstruct the way in which Western systems of knowledge rely upon some originating moment of truth or immanence, from which our whole hierarchy of meaning springs ... termed logocentrism” (Rutherford: 21).

Logocentrism hides cultural diversity claiming ‘universal’ truth, “Central to this logocentric form of thinking is a system of binary operations and distinctions. Those terms that are pre-eminent and invested with truth, achieve that status by excluding and marginalising what they are not” (Rutherford: 21). Words like active/passive, black/white, culture/nature are words loaded with racist meaning. Rutherford explains how,

The centre projects onto the other all the traits it does not wish to have. These stereotypes become manifest in feelings of racism and homophobia toward the other. But cultures and identities can never be wholly separate, instead the interrelationships of differences are marked by translation and negotiation. The cultural politics of difference recognises difference and its conflicts (Rutherford: 26).

Identity is politically not biologically formed. To identify as black is not about colour but about cultural differences, “to conceptualise the social construction of bicultural

identity formation requires an understanding of the process of racialization” (Darder: 12).

Homi Bhabha makes the distinction between cultural diversity and cultural difference, positing that whilst democratic Western societies may pride themselves on accommodating cultural diversity, the dominant culture, “which says that ‘these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid’. This is what I mean by a *creation* of cultural diversity and a *containment* of cultural difference” (Bhabha 1990: 208). Bhabha argues that the liberal relativist perspective that supports cultural diversity is inadequate in not recognising the normative stance it takes. Influenced by Fanon, post-structuralism and psychoanalysis he advocates cultural difference, but emphasises that different cultures do not easily co-exist and that cultures have their own ‘systems of meaning’. Influenced by Benjamin’s essay “the Task of the Translator”³⁸ he suggests that all cultures are in some way related to each other because they all are symbol-forming and subject-constituting. He develops a theory of culture looking at translation as a way of imitating or simulating, so the original is never ‘an essence’, complete in itself. It is upon these ideas of difference and translation that Bhabha constructs his theory of ‘hybridity’,

... if ... the act of cultural translation (both as representation and as reproduction) denies the essentialism of a prior given original or originary culture, then we see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of

³⁸ Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*.

hybridity ... hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge (Bhabha 1990: 211).

This third space, seeks to undo cultural binarism and essentialism³⁹. "So I think that political negotiation is a very important issue, and hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them" (Bhabha 1990: 216).

The imposition of British culture on Māori created a hybrid state, a mix of identities, and an inferiority complex. As Fanon argues, "Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (Hall 1990b: 224).

The transcultural dimensions of biculturalism must then be situated within a continually changing process of cultural identity formation, as much as within complex human negotiations for social and material survival. The place where these processes and negotiations evolve and shift, construct and reconstruct, is what Homi Bhabha (1990) terms "the third space." It is also in his discussions of the third space that Bhabha engages the "process of hybridity" ... It is then this "process of hybridity" that constitutes one of the central characteristics of border existence where the border itself becomes a political terrain of struggle and self-determination (Darder: 13).

Hybridity

The border, where people live between two realities, this third space is a shock culture, the interface, "Border culture means ... hybrid art forms for new content-in-gestation ... to be fluid in English, Spanish, Spanglish, and ingenol, 'cause Spanglish is

³⁹ Essentialism is the idea that one possesses the truth and fixity of culture. That there is an origin prior to the existence of the individual with a classification system. It excludes and includes.

the language of border diplomacy” (Darder: 14). Gomez-Pena⁴⁰ politicises the border in performance, he has created a mixed language, Spanglish, and consciously performs political theatre focusing on the politics of the border between Mexico and the United States. Gomez-Pena calls for the marginalized to unite, “The insidious colonial tendencies we have internalised ... must be overcome. We must realize that we are not each other’s enemies and that the true enemy is currently enjoying our divisiveness” (Darder: 15). His is a hybrid performance combining languages to create a homogenised form.

Hybridity, conjures the uniting of two different species to make difference into same,

In the nineteenth century, we have seen that a common analogous argument was made that the descendants of mixed-race unions would eventually relapse to one of the original races, thus characterizing miscegenation as temporary in its effects as well as unnatural in its very nature (Young 1995: 26).

The decolonising tactic of hybridity, the mixing of two into one, is a conscious deconstruction of the principles of essentialism. However, Young queries if, “in deconstructing such essentialist notions of race today we may rather be repeating the past than distancing ourselves from it or providing a critique of it” (Young 1995: 27).

What does he mean? Could it be that with the concentrated debate surrounding meanings of biculturalism, multiculturalism and analysis of classification linked to nationalism and essentialism we have we moved from biologism to culturalism?

⁴⁰ Manifesto of Guillermo Gomez-Pena’s *Warrior for Gringostroika*.

“Culture and race developed together, imbricated within each other: their discontinuous forms of repetition suggest, as Foucault puts it, ‘how we have been trapped in our own history’. The nightmares of the ideologies and categories of racism continue to repeat upon the living” (Young 1995: 28). The very use of the word hybridity raises questions of racial purity and authenticity. A literal reading takes one back to the eighteenth century and the scientific classification of human beings by blood lines as it was implemented in relation to the slave trade and colonisation, intermarriage between races and the fear of miscegenation. In the 1890s the imperial centre was often fixated on whether cultural objects from the colonies were authentic, or racially pure. The question of ‘authentic’ is still to be found in contemporary society, particularly in relation to judgements of cultural performance and relates to definitions of race and identity.

The word *traditional* is another which causes difficulty. It has often been used to identify Maori society and culture ‘as they were’, so that it has become in many minds a synonym for pre-European, “Applied in a 20th century context, it is often taken to mean ‘the same as in pre-European times’, ignoring change. These usages are ambiguous and misleading” (Stokes: 58). As Roma Potiki has stated, it is not possible to go back to the authentic, as there is nowhere to go back to, and Hall posits,

cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us on which

role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time – feminist, anti-colonial and anti-racist” (Hall 1990b: 224). He asks if the re-telling, or the re-presenting of old histories, that were ‘buried and overlaid’, is *not* a rediscovery of identity, but the actual *production* of identity? “Not an identity grounded in the archaeology, but in the *re-telling* of the past?” (1990b: 224).

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. It is only from this second position that we can properly understand the traumatic character of ‘the colonial experience’. The ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation. Not only, in Said’s ‘Orientalist’ sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as ‘Other’ (Hall 1990b: 225).

Songs to the Judges (1998) was an attempt to re-tell, to create identity in the re-telling for both Māori and Pākehā actors and spectators. The actors did not know the history of Parihaka or Bastion Point and neither did many spectators. It was also for others, a re-membering of events many had lived through, for example, the Land March, where some members of the audience had forgotten their anger.

Bicultural theatre

This chapter began with an analysis of biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand as an introductory base from which to view bicultural theatre. Biculturalism, with all its questions and theories about what and how it might operate, is just as fragmented in relation to the theatre. How does one operate in a bicultural theatre production? In Aotearoa New Zealand bicultural theatre indicates Pākehā and Māori participants. Do they rehearse separately and then present the works in the same space at the same time? Or, do they rehearse together? Are the cultural forms kept separate between the players, or do Pākehā learn Māori forms and vice versa? Experiments with all these ways of working have and are being presented for audiences.

What is bicultural theatre? If we define Pākehā theatre, in European logocentric terms, as theatre that originated from Greek theatre or tragedy, which has an antagonist, protagonist, mimesis and catharsis, the question can then be asked, what is Māori theatre? Māori performance (pre-contact with Europeans) did not have mimesis, that is, the representation of another. Māori performance was part of life, used daily, and at times of festivity, war or tangi, “The European concept of theatre did not exist in traditional Maori society, but on a much wider and more general scale, theatre was practised every day – daily karakia and the composition of waiata by individuals were common. Music and poetry were an everyday part of the human condition” (Kouka 1999: 10). In terms of a Western definition based on the tenants of

Greek tragedy, Māori did not have ‘theatre’. That the European concept of theatre did not exist in Māori society will be examined in terms of Royal’s PhD thesis, ‘Te Whare Tapere’, an investigation of specific buildings that Māori constructed for performance.

Is Māori performance theatre?

Boal locates the origin of Western theatre prior to Greek tragedy, in the worship of Dionysus where, “‘Theater’ was the people singing freely in the open air; the theatrical performance was created by and for the people, and could thus be called dithyrambic song. It was a celebration in which all could participate freely” (Boal 1974: Foreword). The twentieth century Western tendency to separate theatre as a discipline discrete from dance and music does not have a correspondence in Māori terms, ‘One of the aspects of Maori culture,’ explains Don [Selwyn], ‘is to say, well it’s part of the whole, and you can’t take one out without destroying the fabric of others, or you can’t put one in unless you embrace the others’” (Greenwood 2002: 33).

However,

If the integration of ritual and theatrical conventions is taken for granted in non-Western performance situations, it is highly questioned in contemporary Western theatre. [...] Ritual, with its evocation of negative connotations of primitive, superstitious, and unscientific behavior associated with savage peoples, has no place in the industrialized high-technology Western world of today (Amankulor in Marannca: 228).

From another perspective Elin Diamond, in *Performance and Cultural Politics*, argues that performance is part of the cultural practice of a society, from popular

entertainment to ritual and everyday life. She points out that the new interest in performance has led to a “reassessment of the political status of theatre” (Goodman: 52). ‘Theatre’ has been seen as conforming to the authority of the text and author, but ‘performance’ has disrupted this by emphasising the “body as a social text” (Regan: 53) and undermining illusionist strategies of realist theatre. As the boundaries of theatre and performance cross, does (for instance) the practice of the Māori hosts of a hui to entertain their guests with singing and dancing at the poroporoaki constitute theatre?

Māori performance

Charles Royal has researched the history of a Māori building constructed specifically for performance. This building was called a *whare tapere* which means a house of amusement and theatre arts. The *whare tapere* was a performance institution brought to Aotearoa New Zealand by ancestors from Polynesia and is the base of Māori theatre. The word *whare* is not only used to describe a building, but also means ‘collectivity’ describing a group and their activities, “In all cases, the *whare tapere* stood for a collection of discrete activities whose overall description might fall under the title of ‘entertainment’, whether this be located in a particular building or not” (Royal: 8). Use of the historical *whare tapere* stopped in the nineteenth century, but Royal posits that non-Māori forms such as *mimesis* may be used in the new *whare tapere*, which he proposes should be re-established in Aotearoa New Zealand. Royal situates his thesis as “a theory upon which the *whare tapere* institution might be

renewed in the 21st century” (8). Royal’s research reveals that there were different kinds of whare tapere: the whare matua, a house of entertainment for all people; the whare karewhai, a house for young people to meet and sexual partners arranged and (in Tahiti) a place to find the sacred, kept only for performance and where no children were permitted.

To contextualise his research, Royal begins by searching for a Māori worldview on which to base his theory of the whare tapere, and this world view is ‘Te Ao Mārama’, the world of light, which is founded on the Māori creation myth of the separation of Ranginui (sky father) and Papatuanuku (earth mother), “As Ranginui and Papatuanuku are referred to in all iwi traditions, I argue that the Te Ao Mārama world view and philosophy is a pan-Māori phenomenon” (Royal: iii). Royal explains that he began his dissertation with the words ‘Māori Theatre’ in the title, but soon encountered the tensions inherent in this title and changed it to ‘Māori Performance Art’. He claims, “a concept central to Western theatre is *mimesis* and its impact upon Western theatre can not be under estimated. *Mimesis* is the notion of a person taking on the persona of another, and then ‘acting’ out the life of that second person ... *Mimesis* is not present in Māori culture” (Royal: 11-12). Royal uses instead of the word Theatre in his title, Performance Art, a term that is also a difficult usage, as the concept of ‘art’ as a separate activity from daily life, is not found in Māori culture. Royal quotes Artaud, “aim at the spiritual and imaginary level” and links the whare tapere into

performance traditions ranging from Shakespeare, kabuki, Peking Opera and gamelan, to Grotowski, claiming its affinity to storytelling, dance, song and acting. The kinds of entertainment performed in the *whare tapere* included many kinds of dance, including the erotic which was performed with few clothes, musical instruments, spinning top games, stick and hand clapping games, puppets, forms of theatre, food and laughter. One famous solo dancer was Te Kahurangimoa, of whom it is reported that her eyes lit up like fire when she performed, and her fingers seemed to leave her hand and go to touch her forearm, her suppleness creating an illusive and mysterious performance. From this account it can be assumed that Māori performers sometimes performed solo, not only in the preferred form of group performance.

The third section of Royal's thesis is a call to reconstruct a new *whare tapere*, and he details how to build this within the landscape. In reply to this and questions about its authenticity he argues, "Certainly 20th and 21st century Māori can not escape the reality of colonisation, however, we can journey towards coming to an understanding of where colonisation has affected our understanding of ancestral phenomenon and concepts and where it has not" (Royal: 10).

In relation to 'authenticity' the Māori action song is often critiqued by Europeans as not authentic because it uses Western music and melodies, and the conclusion is often drawn that Māori never had their own musical tradition. To put this critique into perspective I would point out that action songs were not 'traditional' – in

the sense of pre-European. They were invented by Ngata (in approx 1912) and Te Puea, and were made popular by being toured as performances. The performance of contemporary action songs as tourist performance follows in the tradition in which they originated, they were never a pure indigenous form, but used rhythmic Western music as a base to accompany the actions. These action songs proved to be a way of regaining the interest of Māori youth in Māori culture and fed into the Māori renaissance. In contemporary society kapa haka groups compete in national competitions which attract thousands of spectators and are broadcast on national television. New songs are being composed, often with political themes, in a living culture.

Theatre is perhaps the most forceful, *active*, if you like, genre of cultural performance, but there are many others, some of which I have mentioned. No society is without some mode of metacommentary – Geertz’s illuminating phrase for a “story a group tells itself about itself” or in the case of theatre, a play a society acts about itself – not only a reading of its experience but an interpretative reenactment of its experience (Turner 1982: 104).

What is bicultural theatre? Where is it? *Taki Rua Theatre*, based in Wellington, has for a number of years had a bicultural kaupapa. It established an annual Te Reo Season with plays in Māori performed on marae for children. In 1997 *Taki Rua* decided to give up their theatre space and become a production company, concentrating on making and touring performances, rather than putting energy into running a ‘space’. At the final meeting in the theatre one question that was discussed was whether the

kaupapa should be changed from a commitment to bicultural theatre to only Māori theatre. The answer to this question was not resolved at that time, but the focus of subsequent performances favours a predominant Māori stance. Also in 1997 the graduating performance of *Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School*, which has a bicultural kaupapa, consisted of two performances, *Vinegar Tom* by the Pākehā actors and *Resurrection* by the Māori actors. Were these two separate performances a representation of bicultural theatre? Currently bicultural seasons in commercial theatres frequently consist of three quarters of the year in European productions with three or four Māori plays added in. Is this acknowledgement of the Other being bicultural? Or, is bicultural theatre an interrelationship between Māori and Pākehā in the making of the works? Mere Boynton, collaborator in *Taki Rua* pointed out, Māori have been bicultural since Europeans came to New Zealand. So, if Māori are bicultural (and there are degrees of this especially with urbanisation) where does this leave Tauīwi? Do they speak Māori? Do they want to? Have they ever been onto a marae? Have we passed beyond Māori and Pākehā working together on a performance? Are we now in a period of a development of nationalism for Māori? I interviewed Mere Boynton in March 1997, just prior to Taki Rua theatre giving up its space in Alpha Street and becoming a touring company.

Lili: What do you think about bicultural theatre? Is it desirable, is it possible, or is it exploitative? It is often suggested that Western theatre is not a Māori form, what can you see, what can you take?

Mere: I think it happens in all artistic forms, all artists observe and steal – it keeps it warm and alive. People shouldn't be afraid to market what they have got if it helps them get to where they want to be.

In the 1970s and 1980s Pākehā and Māori began working together in theatre.

Paul Maunder who had participated in Grotowski workshops returned to Aotearoa New Zealand and established the theatre group *Amamus* and later *Theatre of the Eighth Day*, and approximately the same time *Maranga Mai* were presenting Agitprop performance. Roma Potiki was a leading figure in these groups, who (in hindsight) cast a critical eye over the experiences and power relationships which operated. McNaughton in an interview with Hone Kouka recalls these early days of bicultural theatre and how Māori sometimes felt that Pākehā were using their performance forms for their own agendas or performance, not from a Māori kaupapa.

HOWARD: Roma Potiki has talked rather negatively of moving from the *Maranga Mai* experience to Paul Maunder's *Theatre of the Eighth Day*, which claimed to be a self-consciously bicultural theatre but in her view remained 'an intellectualized pākehā form that used Māori motifs' so that the Māori participants felt they were 'plundered for content'. Is that still a risk in bicultural theatre, or has the balance of authority shifted?

HONE: I think that can still happen, but a lot of the initiatives now are coming from Māori recognising areas lacking expertise and approaching pākehā practitioners who have that expertise. Whenever I want to work with someone, I always state that I'm coming into this because I want something, as much as they want something from me as well (Gilbert 1999: 113-17).

From a different perspective Moriarty recalls his time with Maunder,

Jim: I did spend about seven years with a group called *Amamus*, which was headed by a fellow called Paul Maunder and he worked really intensely with Grotowski stuff, the Poor Theatre model. I loved that, I loved every minute of that. That was very much about stripping it all back down to the true essence of the actor as instrument, your voice, your body, your ability to connect with any space anywhere, anytime, any of the huge trappings that can go with theatre today. So that was a huge influence on me (McGregor: 2000).

HOWARD: James Ritchie has recently written a book *Becoming Bicultural*, which I read as a covert answer to Michael King's *Becoming Pakeha*, saying 'being Pakeha is not enough in today's world, you've got to learn to become bicultural'. Now, I've heard *Becoming Bicultural* criticized because to all intents and purposes 'Becoming Bicultural' means 'Becoming Māori'. But I wonder whether it isn't stating that within biculturalism it's Pākehā these days who have to do the running, to 'get up to speed'. This focuses I think on an issue of access, that Māori have been forced to find access to Pākehā culture for a very long time, as perhaps even in the Potiki/Maunder disagreement, but now cultural access has to be seen as a two-way thing. So it seems that what Ritchie says has fundamental implications for the idea of bicultural theatre; if it is to be a practical reality, cultural entry and access has to be a deliberately two-way thing.

HONE: Yep, I agree with that entirely. It's also the power struggle that people talk about constantly. Pākehā have to relinquish some power for Māori to get a voice, and theatre's a good example of that. And now we've got to a stage where Māori and Māoridom has accelerated so much that the other side has to catch up. Some commentators state, 'Does that mean that we have to be Māori?' I don't think it's becoming Māori, it's having an understanding, and an acceptance as well. And again I'll go back to the example of working with Colin McColl and Murray Lynch. They had an acceptance of where they stood at the beginning of it, and what they had to gain, and also where we stood and what we had to gain as well. The partnership just seemed to work beautifully. For me, that's the closest I've come to biculturalism, in that working context (Gilbert 1999: 113-17).

How are we to define theatre? Performances of intercultural and bicultural theatre bring up debate on theatre and performance. With these questions in mind Balme⁴², in his analysis of the mix of indigenous and Western performance forms, argues that,

The response of intellectuals and theatre artists in colonized countries to the Western form of theatre and their attempts to reconcile it on a theoretical level in some way with existing indigenous performance forms marks a tradition of discourse which is at least as old as theatrical and dramatic practice. The programmatic formulation of an indigenous theory of syncretic theatre reveals a struggle against the normative Western discourse of what constitutes 'theatre' and 'drama'. For the practice of syncretic theatre requires the freedom to adapt a wide range of performance forms which may not appear to conform to narrow definitions of dramaturgy (1999: 25).

One way out of the debate over the definition of "theatre" is to use instead the word "performance". Performance is interdisciplinary encompassing music, dance, theatre, digital technology, Māori performing arts, etcetera. Performance theory has been led by Richard Schechner (director and academic) and influenced by Victor Turner (anthropologist) and as a field of studies began in the 1960s. Performance research has led to,

a much closer examination of the interrelationships between performative phenomena such as song, dance, and ritual enactment in non-Western societies. In this way of thinking, the Western-staged play is by no means a particularly privileged object but just a specific manifestation of the anthropological entity 'performance'. In order to cement such a view, performance theory has needed to look outside the Western sphere of performance and has preoccupied itself intensively with a wide range of non-Western performance forms (Balme 1999: 26).

⁴² Chris Balme. *Decolonizing the Stage*.

In *Decolonizing the Stage* Balme presents these questions relating to theatre and performance in terms of postcolonial performance, or what he terms “syncretic theatre” where indigenous performance forms are layered onto a Western form. In the history of Western thinking there has been, especially since the nineteenth century, the promotion of keeping things pure, of not mixing blood, and this is opposed to the idea of hybridity and syncretism,

applied to the theatre, this means that theatrical syncretism proceeds from a perspective predicated on the bridging of cultural dichotomies ... Among the many dichotomies in need of bridging, or, perhaps better, dissolving, belong oppositions such as Western versus traditional or European versus indigenous ... Elements of plays and performances were examined which could be identified as indigenous cultural texts such as rites, oral forms, the textuality of the body, dance, and spatial conceptions. This approach differs fundamentally from previous criticism of post-colonial drama, which has tended to be thematically orientated (Balme 1999: 272-273).

If the novel has played a part in the implementation of imperialism, then it can also play a part in the process of decolonisation, and now that Māori writers are being published this is happening. Not only with the novel, but in Aotearoa New Zealand Māori playwrights (especially women) are the most prolific in the country as theatre and film have been recognised by Māori as persuasive ways to use language and make an influence on how people see themselves and their relations to the world in which they live. Māori writers have written predominantly in English as,

sadly the majority of Maori do not have a strong grasp of our language. This means that we do not use it as our prime means of communication. Nor can the majority of us fully understand what is being said on the marae by our

kaumatua using Te Reo Maori. The process of colonisation has been very thorough. It has penetrated so deeply as to dislocate many of us even from our own culture. This dis-location causes a lack of confidence in ourselves and our opinions, a pervasive anxiety. In turn this anxiety profits those individuals and institutions that still condescend, and patronise us ... And it is probably this anxiety that Maori plays deal with most (Potiki 1991: 57-9).

As a new generation is growing up fluent in te reo Māori, there is now an audience for plays in Māori, where Māori children are proud of their heritage, where the language is their source of identity, where stereotypes which produced an inferiority complex are broken. This is happening through language, and that language is being heard on the stages of this land.

In directing *Songs to the Judges* the politics of language were negotiated. Most of the Māori actors could not speak te reo Māori fluently. The texts in te reo were learnt by the actors and rehearsed under the direction of Rai Rakatau, our kaumatua, working on the pronunciation, intonation and rhythm. In directing the play I could not assume that the Māori actors would know Māori language or performance forms. Postcolonial playtexts frequently use more than one language in a heteroglossia of communication, “The simultaneous presence of several languages on stage is, on the one hand, a simple problem of comprehension and semantics. On the other hand, it also reflects in complex ways the ideological issues outlined above: language in a post-colonial situation is almost always linked to questions of power” (Balme 1999: 110).

Both Mason and Thompson acknowledged the need for Māori playwrights to take over the pen and the responsibility of telling Māori narrative. Thompson actively nurtured new playwrights by facilitating their plays in special workshop sessions for Playmarket. Māori writing has flourished and consequently what may be called bicultural theatre is in the majority of cases written by Māori authors, and also often labelled Māori theatre. More often than not bicultural theatre operates with a Māori kaupapa, which could include specific ways to open and close the rehearsal session.

In the kaupapa (introduction) for *Te Ao Mārama* Witi Ihimaera calls for a bilingual literature in Aotearoa New Zealand, “Will the 1990s see a struggle for a bilingual literature? If so, who will lead it? The irony is that, so far, the only people who possess a bilingual literature are the Māori people themselves ... Who then, will join us in the struggle for a literature in both our languages?” (1992: 18).

“The institutional situation of Maori theatre in New Zealand in both theory and practice is quite different [from Australia and Canada]. It is the declared aim of many Maori theatre artists to indigenize the theatre as an institution and place of encounter” (Balme 1999: 62). After performances of *Songs to the Judges*, spectators were often excited and energised by the realisation that theatre can be a powerful tool to influence public opinion. It utilises all of the skills required on the pae pae: oratory, song, movement and oral literature. In this instance spectators were being inspired to make theatre themselves. However, Balme points out, as articulated by Roma Potiki, that

just incorporating indigenous cultural texts into a performance does not necessarily make for good theatre, and Potiki calls for them not to be overused. This must relate to all theatre, the idea that form and content are related and integral to each other. If the content calls for a haka, then a haka may need to be performed. Of course this too, will depend on the dramaturgical methodology being employed in the creation of the work.

Nowadays Maori theatre is in its second phase. It still has little economic security but it has a small pool of strong and developing playwrights, a small number of experienced and beginning directors and a larger pool of semi-professional and professionally trained actors (Roma Potiki: 1997).

Oral Tradition

“‘How is it’, asks Antonin Artaud in his essay ‘Production and Metaphysics’, ‘Western theatre cannot conceive of theatre under any other aspect than dialogue form?’” (Balme 1999: 146). Artaud directs his assault against psychological drama based on dialogue and this is how much theatre in the West is described, as ‘talking heads’. When improvisation is discussed, it is for theatre in terms of, ‘smart’ dialogue, superficial and banal. “There are, however, numerous occasions where dialogue is replaced by other modes of linguistic communication. The most frequent and important of these ‘deviations’ is *oral performance* ... a second non-dialogic mode is constituted by various forms of *lyric-musical songs or verse*” (Balme 1999: 147). In 1936 Dhlomo wrote in ‘Drama and the African’,

‘Action! Rhythm! Emotion! Gesture! Imitation! Desires! That is what drama was before it developed into an institution for propaganda, the propagation of

ideas, or for commercialized entertainment. Action, rhythm and the other histrionic qualities are not foreign to the African – neither is drama. Indeed, there is no race in the world which did not have some kind of tribal dramatic representation’ (Balme 1999: 32).

Balme reads Dhlomo’s essay as shifting the emphasis on theatre away from dialogue to non-verbal performance forms. Dhlomo’s theoretical writings argue for indigenous theatre in terms not assigned back to the history of Western theatre, that is, to the Greek theatre and Aristotle’s *Poetics*. In his essay ‘Nature and Variety of Tribal Drama’ he articulates the importance of the oral tradition as a performance form and links this traditional form to contemporary media which favours the voice: radio, cd’s, and advertising. He “anticipates by several decades the primacy given to orality by contemporary media theorists in their considerations of the mass media” (Balme 1999: 36). The importance of the oral tradition is relevant in a discussion of performance in Aotearoa New Zealand because it is one of the differences between the Māori and Pākehā cultures, which Roma Potiki articulates, “It is hard to establish oneself in the mainstream of a society dominated by Pakeha systems when you don’t have a recorded his/herstory. Of course we have oral tradition, but the mainstream ... is defined by a written tradition” (1991: 58). European culture defines itself with written literature, history, narratives, maps and has often judged oral cultures as barbaric and uncivilised.

In pre-scribal cultures storytelling has its own performance aesthetics, as Moriarty has commented, “the prancing and dancing and whaikōrero of the kaumatua

and kuia on the marae are as theatrical as any other dramatic form”.⁴³ This oral performance is another level of cultural text that can be utilised in contemporary performance. In Māori culture the whaikōrero on the paepae utilises the form of the monologue, which is often employed by feminist theatre as a political stance⁴⁴. In oral performance there is the word, the body and the relationship with the audience.

Woman Far Walking, by Witi Ihemaera, was a discernable shift from the Western theatre tradition to a Māori oral, storytelling tradition. The auditorium was dimly lit so the actor could see the spectators and make eye contact with them, talking to them individually. Music, song, chant, dance and mo rakau were employed, but it was the storytelling that was predominant. It is this aspect of Māori culture that Jim Moriarty claims as his beginnings in a life of performance.

Lilicherie: How/why were you first attracted to theatre? To be an actor?

Jim: It started for me – I take it right back to, you know, to the storytelling side, the dual nature of who I am both from the European Norwegian side and the Māori side and both those cultures were storytellers and as I grew up in Aotearoa as a kid I mean we didn’t have any televisions, videos all this sort of modern communications stuff. I remember my brothers and sisters, my cousins, my aunties telling me stories and a lot of them were whakapapa stories, you know, they were stories about the history of Te Rauparaha and all that sort of stuff, Ngati Korapa, Ngati Toa, the iwi’s that I stem from. You know as a Māori, culturally and historically, our way of passing on information was through an oral form. So storytelling was no big deal it was just what you did. And that’s what happened to me, I was surrounded by storytellers and so it rubbed off onto me or rubbed out in me and I told stories I liked, frightening the

⁴³ Interview with McGregor 2000.

⁴⁴ For example, *for coloured girls* by Shange, a series of monologues and dances which she labels a ‘choreopoem’.

smaller kids with my spooky ghost stories. I remember trying to be very dramatic and taking really extremely dramatic measures to make a point and that was there from as early as I can remember ... On my cultural side of course I was down at the marae all the time hearing the old people do their stuff. Now that, watching the old people prance and dance, parry and thrust, using words and cultural language and movement, kapa haka, waiata, mo rakau to basically honour a whole life of experiences. It was wonderful, so that was the sort of thing I was brought up with, and there wasn't TV in our home, there wasn't all those other gadgets and tools that we have now. So I was surrounded by it, so I am not surprised that I have ended up continuing to do it in some way, shape or form (McGregor: 2000).

Prison Theatre

During this interview with Moriarty I asked him to elaborate on his speech at 'Writers Week' in Christchurch (1997) where he said that he worked with his people, and they were not in the theatre buildings of the city, but on the marae and in prison. That although Māori are a minority in the population, their numbers are the majority in the prisons and that he went into prisons to create performances with and for them. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault argues that issues of punishment relate to the body and its submission. He argues that the shift in punishment from public expiation on the body to the invisibility of locking bodies away in buildings, was aimed at rehabilitation, at the heart of the wrongdoer. In Aotearoa New Zealand theatre is being recognised as a method of rehabilitation and Moriarty has been a leader in this area creating performances by working with groups of prisoners over periods of up to three months. He develops with the prisoners: physical and vocal training routines; the learning of waiata and Māori performance forms utilising te reo Māori language; prisoners writing

their own stories and telling them (some prisoners could not write and through this process began to do so); singing; dancing; playing musical instruments; making costumes; and working together as a group to create a united performance. This work, which is ensemble based, builds trust within a multicultural group and trust is often the element that has been missing in the lives of the prisoners.

In this land of equal opportunity, this bicultural paradise, why is it that half of the people in our jails are Māori? Young, angry, violent Māori men and women. Why are they angry? Will it help to build new prisons, as is the government policy, to intensify security and throw away the key?

Fact: At 126 per 100,000 head of population, we have one of the highest imprisonment rates in the world

Fact: Most prisoners are men, 96% are under 30 years with no school qualifications, and were on a benefit before going to prison

Fact: Nearly half are Maori (45%) (*The New Zealand Herald*, 23 May: 1998).

It is interesting to note that even though these facts have been foregrounded in society for many years, statistically the figures have not altered significantly since Thompson's writing of *Songs to the Judges*. *Te Puna Kokiri* report on 'the gaps' between Māori and Pākehā,

- Maori commit more crime than Pakeha and are almost four times more likely to be apprehended for a violent crime.
- Maori hospital admissions are almost twice the rate of Pakeha.
- The teenage pregnancy rate among Maori is four times higher than non-Maori.
- Deaths from diabetes are nine times higher, from lung cancer – four times higher, and cervical cancer – six times higher (*NZ Listener* 28 Oct 2000: 21).

In fact the figures appear to be worse than when Thompson wrote *Songs to the Judges* in 1979. In *Three Times more Likely* he says, “One of the reasons many Maoris are singing a new kind of song is seen in our crime statistics ... The growing poverty and unemployment in our land hits the young urban Maori first and hardest”

Three times more likely I than you
 To be referred for a probation report,
 Three times more likely I than you
 To be convicted in this court.
 Three times less likely I than you
 To be given the benefit of the doubt,
 Three times less likely I than you
 Once in prison to ever get out! (Thompson 1980).

DOC: Man. Just about everywhere I see Maoris on the bottom of the heap. Look. There's mostly Maoris in this place... (Stewart 1991: 13).

This line of Doc's from *Broken Arse* encompasses the reason why Jim Moriarty works with drama in prisons across the motou (land), because he wants to work with Maori and the statistics show that Māori make up a large proportion of prison inmates.

By bringing city dwellers into the prison to see the prisoners perform, Moriarty, by creating a theatre in this social milieu, creates meaning and levels of experience for the audience which effect their perceptions of the theatre performance. The comments of Aboriginal writer and director Gerry Bostock about *The Cake Man* apply equally well to Moriarty's prison theatre:

The audience who'd never been to black theatre and had never been to the ghetto, had to go through the ghetto to get to the theatre, and that in itself was a great psychological advantage to the play, because people were coming there for the first time. [...] The thing with *The Cake Man* was that in that environment, in Redfern, you were confronting people not only with what was in the play, but what was in the street outside, so that had a dynamic sort of effect on all the audience (Balme 1999: 231).

By presenting a performance inside a prison, the spectators (the rich and cultured from society, the ones who uphold Law and Order, the normal and the charitable) are forced to undergo a loss of autonomy and psychological shift. In an interview with Helen Gibson about *Songs to the Judges* she commented on the prison performance:

You know when we went to the women's prison to watch that ... and there were heaps of Merivale⁴⁵ people there. That was a bit weird, that wasn't as threatening as the Māori thing. [on the marae] Social workers, all that huge group of middle class women, quite liberal those women, I would say, I mean that's a huge generalisation, but they were predominantly white women weren't they. (McGregor: 2000).

Spectators must pass through the gates of the prison, where they can take no handbags or objects in their pockets, they must be frisked as if they were prisoners. Once inside they must gather tightly together and wait in the corridor for admittance to the performance space, watched by prison wardens, monitored. The spectators are in effect locked inside the prison, behind bars, with the prisoners as if they were prisoners. For those who have never been inside a prison this is quite an apprehensive experience, outside their safety zone, outside their cultural space – here time and space take on a

⁴⁵ Merivale, is the upper class suburb of Christchurch.

new perspective. Of course the marae concept is behind this grouping together, waiting to be called into the performance space, welcomed, haere mai, haere mai, haere mai.

This was a cultural journey for many people, with no late comers admitted. The spectators enter together as a unit and come out the other side together. Moriarty's politics is to take the theatre out of the building of the theatre, and put it where Māori people are, in prison and on marae. By making the audience participate in the rituals of entering the space they become participants along with the actors. He tears the walls down, destroying,

the barriers created by the ruling classes. First, the barrier between actors and spectators is destroyed: all must act ... Then the barrier between protagonists and choruses is destroyed: all must be simultaneously chorus and protagonist ... Thus we arrive at the *poetics of the oppressed*, the conquest of the means of theatrical production (Boal 1974: Foreword).

Lilicherie: How have you been experimenting with space? In the first prison performance I saw in Christchurch the audience were sitting on seats looking at a stage space in front, and the most recent performance was set in the round. Do you consciously try to work the actor/audience relationship through space?

Jim: Yeh, yeh, I mean I guess I ought to keep going back to the traditions of my ... in as much as there are going to be certain rituals to perform, as you welcome them in, as each of the parties seats themselves in relation to that sacred space in the middle, and I certainly see, however we arrange the space, the relationship in the end is sacred. So I am totally open and flexible as to how theatre is presented, I mean there are certain limitations obviously for us in relation to working inside, I would have loved to have walked the audience through the prison as part of the process and had them all sit in cells or something, and hear the doors open and close until it was too loud for them, stuff like that, and I asked the manager at the time whether we could do this sort of thing you know if you want a total experience, have one. But there are limitations. They did at least, the people had to turn up, they had to drive all the way out there, and that was already an inconvenience, on a cold winters night and huddle around a really

cold dark corridor they had to walk through a magnetic machine to see whether they had weapons on them. Sometimes there was a dog sniffing at their crotch, you know they had to relieve themselves of their few valuables and things. We had a great set, it could have been extended in terms of using the whole space ... The circular thing was a progression of things to get them right inside, you know the cellular exchange with the people who were telling their stories, so you couldn't escape from it. That was the idea. Space is a wonderful thing, all this theatre stuff for me is, what are we in the end? We just, we carve space up don't we, we carve space up. We carve the air up that's what we do, so its limitless as to how you apply that notion in a relationship between audience and performers (McGregor: 2000).

In 1997 I wrote a review of Moriarty's prison performance *A Xmas Wish*,

AROHATA prison's Christmas production *A Xmas Wish* started this week at the Tawa prison. Twenty-seven women are involved in the production this year, which is designed to both help the inmates rehabilitate through dramatic expression, and provide an outlet for emotions stirred by separation from family and friends over Christmas. There are 200 women in New Zealand prisons, and 5,500 men. The performance helps people look at these women in a different light and gives them a better understanding of their actions. *A Xmas Wish* includes women who took part in the original production in 1996, *Kia Maumahara*, also produced by Moriarty. The success of the original show, and another staged at Christchurch Women's Prison has led to him being invited to direct more prison productions including men's prisons.

Moriarty's core group is comprised of many nationalities and he claims to have always worked biculturally or interculturally.

Lilicherie: When you are working in the prison you work with bicultural, multicultural people. Do you work predominantly with a Māori kaupapa? How do you negotiate?

Jim: Jim Moriarty arrives with his own sense of who he is, where he sits in the world and I am quite happy about that, but I remain open to every single ingredient that every person brings so no one gets isolated. It's about opening everybody up, the facilitators as well as the clients who you work with, and the public who come and view it, and if someone labels that bicultural, multicultural or kaupapa Maori then so be it. You know I am a Māori, but I am a citizen of the universe. At the same time, I am made up of Norwegian, Scottish, Irish, English, Māori ancestry. How can I ignore any part of

those beautiful strains in myself, you know. People keep saying why have you got such a big forehead Jim? Why its so the bloody Viking helmet could sit on there and not get blown off in the wind. We negotiate our way through the huge seas. When we start I try to start everybody in a place of acknowledgement and respect no matter where you come from or what you bring to the table 'cos everything you have got is all experience and its all good baby, lets put it in this little kete together and grow out of that whatever comes. I don't go in there with a finished product (McGregor: 2000).

The prison work is organised according to a Māori kaupapa⁴⁶ and is drug and alcohol free, where the women prisoners (who volunteer for the project) undertake to 'go clean' for the whole rehearsal and performance period. One reason for this policy is to help develop self-esteem, as Moriarty asks,

How can anyone Māori claim their tinorangatiranga, their mana, if they are constantly subverting it by drinking and drugging and giving it away? Those things are pulling away at your life force, your essence, so that's another big thing for me I don't want to work with anyone who is not prepared to be sober through this experience. Don't put any toxins in your system. How can we unravel what's underneath if we are grappling with toxic behaviour? I am not interested in that. So everyone who comes on with us has to make at least reasonably good attempts to stay clean during the process, and the results are there (Moriarty: 2000).

The prisoners perform, they are no longer locked away invisible, they are made visible and their voices are heard. The stories they tell are their own, their histories, their crimes, their punishments, their joys, their dance and song, their community. From being a number, an object, they become a subject. In a law court, represented by a lawyer, there is little time for the accused to be heard, in the

⁴⁶ Kaupapa Maori can be seen as the deconstruction of those hegemonies which have disempowered Maori from controlling and defining their own knowledge within the context of unequal power relations in New Zealand" (Stokes: 51).

performances the prisoners are given a voice and the public hear it. This creates a communication between classes and races in society as the majority of prisoners come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and are Māori.

The prison theatre of Jim Moriarty is a bicultural and intercultural theatre, where people from different cultures work together under a Māori kaupapa. Moriarty's work is inclusive, both in his core group and with the actors who volunteer to perform. It is not based on a text, but devised work with music and dance, an interdisciplinary performance. The actors are not trained actors. The performances attract a large cross section of the community and are always fully booked.

Bicultural theatre is a convoluted terrain, like the landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand. To critique or analyse it in depth I have chosen an empirical approach, directing and producing a bicultural performance and analysing its results.

CHAPTER IV

MERVYN THOMPSON

New Zealand theatre has with a few exceptions been set in a proscenium arch representing both English architecture and English dramatic perceptions ... The Oak tree is in the wrong place here! It is not used to this angle of the sun! Like in the Northern Hemisphere. Not like the Kauri here! 'I Whanau te Kauri i Konei.' [The Kauri was born here] Hori Tate, 1976. New Zealand dramatists like Bruce Mason and Mervyn Thompson have been sensitive to the 'angle of the sun' and in their own efforts included elements of the 'kowhai' and, in Bruce's case 'the pohutukawa' in their works. They were the first to admit that it did not always sit well with them. Until writers of Maori descent, with the diverse range of their cultural perspectives, emerge, New Zealand Theatre would lack a dynamic presence, from the tangata whenua (Selwyn 1991: 70)¹.

In this chapter Mervyn Thompson is introduced: his personal history; the influences on his work; an analysis of the text of *Songs to the Judges* is made as one aspect of the process of interpretation of a bicultural play for representation in performance; Thompson's and my own productions are placed within their historical contexts; and comparisons are made between the two productions as an underpinning for my bicultural laboratory experiment.

Mervyn Thompson wrote, directed and acted in *Songs to the Judges* (1980), an early example of bicultural theatre that preceded the wave of Māori playwrights who were to emerge from the mid 1980s on. He and Bruce Mason were pioneers in Aotearoa New Zealand theatre in their writing, producing and performing of 'home

¹ The kauri, kowhai and pohutukawa are native trees of Aotearoa New Zealand.

grown' material which included Māori themes and actors. Thompson believed in Aotearoa New Zealand theatre and supported local playwrights, actors, content and form.

Historically I became convinced that there had long existed a plot to deprive New Zealanders of their own past. We had been led to believe that we had no history worth recording or that such history as we had was dull and boring. We had been taught about the queens and kings of Everywhere Else and finding *them* to be dull and boring, had in many cases concluded that *all* history was dull and boring. As a consequence we felt dull and boring ourselves (Thompson 1980: 99).

Thompson believed that history begins at one's 'own back door', and advocated that everyone be conscious of their own role in the process of history making, "A sense of history is a basic human need. Without it one knows nothing. *Is* nothing ... Identity not known" (Thompson 1980: 99). He understood the colonial's position of feeling cultureless and uprooted from their homeland, and after a short visit to England in 1970, returned to Aotearoa New Zealand and began to expose to the common gaze experiences, particularly in relation to class, specific to New Zealanders through his playscripts and theatre productions. Eagleton claims that, "To understand an ideology, we must analyse the precise relations between different classes in a society; and to do that means grasping where those classes stand in relation to the mode of production" (1976: 7).

Thompson's History and Political Influences

Thompson grew up on the West Coast of the South Island, in the isolated mining community of Runanga, a depressing town with high rainfall and hills that shut out the western sun early in the day. The people were poor, surviving on hard work in a hard climate, with a strict hierarchy where the strong intimidated the weak on all levels of society, and at school he was often the victim of bullying tactics,

‘What does your father vote, National or Labour?’

‘Labour.’

THUMP!

‘What does your father vote, National or Labour?’

‘Labour.’

THUMP! THUMP!

‘What does your father vote?’

And they say it pays to be honest! (1980: 10).

At home it was not much better, in *Coaltown Blues*² Thompson writes, “Dad swings at Mum and she falls over in the middle of the big, bare front room, weeping raw and red, and I run towards her and am hit by a sweeping backhand, and my sisters are screaming, and Dad is shouting, ‘I’m sorry, I’m sorry!’” (1986: 16). He grew up with the hypocrisy of his father, who waxed lyrical about the union and supporting one’s work mates, but at home was authoritarian and behaved with brutal force, “Dad could recite the history of the trade union movement in New Zealand by heart ... In Dad’s

² Playscript, 1986. Thompson toured this solo performance throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

world everything came back to union, and his abiding vision was of 30,000 socialist Coasters united under Karl Marx, Nature and God” (Thompson 1980: 18).

The history and context of where Thompson grew up is an important underpinning of his politics and philosophy as a director and writer. After the gold rush in the 1880s the economy of the Grey Valley on the West Coast was dominated by coal mining, “Few other New Zealand communities lived in such narrow confines or existed for such a single economic pursuit ... It is not surprising that industrial unionism appeared early in the Grey district and first among coal miners” (O’Farrell 1975: 101). In 1904 a number of Australians moved into this close-knit society who professed socialist affiliations,

Thereafter the Grey district was to become the base for a campaign to educate and organise the New Zealand Labour movement. Here in microcosm, so it seemed, was the classic Marxist technique with ‘the most advanced and resolute section’ of the working class asserting its historic role. The avowed object was ‘bourgeois’ supremacy, and the acquisition of political power by the proletariat. The language was that of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848: the setting was the draughty tin-roofed halls of Greymouth and Runanga (O’Farrell 1975: 101-2).

Runanga boasted the most vital labour organisation and a Miners’ Union was formed in 1904. Thompson writes in *Coaltown Blues*, “the proudest building in town, the Miners’ Hall, with its brave painted inscriptions: ‘World’s Wealth, World’s Workers!’ and ‘United we Stand, Divided we Fall!’ ... ‘Socialism in this country’, my Dad has a habit of saying, ‘was born in that Hall!’” (Thompson 1986: 23). The

Runanga Borough Council was run on a socialist ticket and up until the 1970s the town store operated as a worker's cooperative.

During World War I it was the Grey coal miners who opposed military conscription, seeing it as a weapon for capitalist imperialism, "The socialist slogan, 'conscription of wealth before the conscription of manpower', which was hammered home by the *Maoriland Worker*, summed up the miners' feeling that the sacrifices of wartime were not equally shared between 'capital' and 'labour'" (O'Farrell 1975: 133). The Runanga miners were denounced as troublemakers by the Grey Chamber of Commerce and the press called them 'pro-German' and the 'enemy in our midst', "Them Commie rats always choose the coldest winter to stop our coal. Oughta be hanged!" (Thompson 1986: 40). In 1935, at the end of the Depression, the first Labour Government was elected in Aotearoa New Zealand and introduced social welfare policies which were largely maintained until 1984, when the then Labour Government began to sell state assets.

Thompson's writing is political, and in *Coaltown Blues* he conflates his own history with the history of the miners' socialist policies; for example, the play begins by displaying the placard '1935 On the Night I was Born!' This was not Thompson's actual birth date but the birth date of the Labour Party, where his roots lay.

Even though his mother had argued against it, Thompson spent five years as a coal miner, fulfilling his father's command, "You'll go down the pit like I had to.

Down among the rats and the dust and the sweat” (Thompson 1986: 30), before studying at the University of Canterbury where he gained an MA in English and became a lecturer in the English Department. It was here that he began to hone his skills as a director, in 1967 directing a successful production of Boris Vian’s *The Empire Builders*. Actors he worked with who began their professional theatre careers at that time include: Sam Neill, John Reid, Bill Stalker, Catherine Wilkie and Richard Nunns, who speaks highly of Thompson crediting him with teaching him all he knows about theatre. His most acclaimed production was *Marat/Sade*, of which he stated, he had little to offer those in search of television-scale naturalism and the banal images of everyday life as one gets more than enough of everyday life every day.

It may be that in their pursuit of shock tactics, Brecht and Artaud have more in common than is generally acknowledged. Peter Weiss managed to synthesize their theories in *Marat/Sade* in a way that illuminated his predecessors as well as history ... The grotesque violence in *Marat/Sade* owes something to the playwright’s interest in fairground spectacle (Schechter 1985: 97).

Weiss acknowledged learning most from Brecht, including the ability to clarify the social issues of the play, but he broke with Brecht’s coolness seeking more disturbing and visceral forms of drama. With the experience of *Marat/Sade* Thompson began to develop his own particular style, mixing intellectual historical content with a form designed to create a visceral response in the audience, which for him was drawn from music hall and popular entertainment.

In 1970 Thompson co-founded The Court Theatre with Yvette Bromley, only to immediately leave Aotearoa New Zealand on sabbatical in England, where he began to write his first play. When he returned he had developed a nationalistic tendency, wanting to bring to New Zealanders' their own, not British history. He believed that one's history is a need, and this belief has similarities to Māori culture with its emphasis on whakapapa as the basis for one's identity. In 1974 at the Court Theatre he ran a season of New Zealand plays which included *Awatea* by Bruce Mason with the Māori actor Don Selwyn. This was his first bicultural production and he found casting the twenty Māori actors difficult. In this production Thompson sought an exchange of knowledges (or in Barba's terminology, a 'barter') which saw him teaching the Māori actors all he could about the craft of acting, while he learnt about Māoritanga.

In 1975 Thompson became artistic director of Downstage Theatre, Wellington, and began to intensify his activities in 'political theatre', focusing on producing plays written by New Zealanders and championing gender equality in casting. He took plays out of the theatre to audiences who might not otherwise go to the theatre, with special performances for schoolchildren, prison inmates and the elderly, believing that, "The meaning of 'political' theatre lies not only in the work performed but also in the nature of the participating audience and the quality of the dialogue that takes place with it" (Thompson 1980: 149).

Whilst at Downstage he learnt about naturalism, in spite of being philosophically opposed to this theatrical genre, “Don’t think that everything that happens in drama has to happen to middle-class people in their drawing rooms. Look at other locales, other groups of people. Look at the far ends of the spectrum. Look at the subcultures” (1980: 174). Raymond Williams, researcher in cultural materialism, critiqued naturalism as focusing on family life and the private, and not able to adequately express the wider concerns of social and historical action. Wellington was not receptive to Thompson’s ‘own’ style of directing and he resigned after two bitter years, at which time Bruce Mason wrote to him,

108. LETTER TO MERVYN THOMPSON 2 November 1976

My dear Proc, I appreciate your letter – should I say rather *cri de Coeur* – very much. I write at once (at 1 a.m. in fact) to assure you that failure and your reign at Downstage are simply not terms that I place together. *Ubu Roi* is one thing; *Proc Roi* is another. You have achieved some marvels – for a time, making that place feel as if it were a company, notably (by my observation) during *Equus* and *Three Sisters* seasons (Dowling 1986: 254).

Thompson became a Senior Lecturer at Auckland University, where he initiated and taught the graduate diploma in Theatre Studies, and workshopped new plays for *Playmarket* passionately guiding Aotearoa New Zealand authors, including Renée, Hoar and McGee, in the shift from page to stage. In the early 1980s Thompson workshopped Renee’s play *Setting The Table* helping her to develop the text for performance and supporting her as a feminist playwright. In 1984 this playscript was enacted on Thompson in real life. One night: he was abducted, stripped naked and tied

to a tree with the word rapist painted over his car. The accusers of the rape never identified themselves, and the case was not taken to the police or to court. Thompson not only created documentary theatre, he was abducted as an actor into a social drama re-enacting an aesthetic drama. In *Coaltown Blues* he tells how his mother had experienced incest as a teenager, and he was appalled by the thought that he was being accused of sexual violence against a woman, and was convinced that the attack on him was the cause of his throat cancer and subsequent death in 1992 at the age of 56.

'I was only ten then, Muriel. So of course I had no idea what he was doing in your bedroom ...'

'I don't want to talk about it, Amy.' *Mum is vehement.*

'I think you should, love.'

'It's all my fault. Bastard child, body of filth. Bad mother, bad mother, bad mother' (Thompson 1986: 33).

The accusation of rape changed his life, creating bad press for him and his work, and dividing the populace over his identity and morals. I personally encountered this while researching *Songs to the Judges* when I was confronted by a Māori woman, who had been in Auckland at this time, who demanded to know why I would direct a play by a rapist. We discussed the matter the whole night through, she eventually reading the script of *Songs to the Judges*, only to come back to me in the morning and say that anyone who could write like that about the land, could not possibly be a rapist, and I

had her blessing to continue with the play. Another accusation against him from some quarters, was that of being paternalistic, as speaking ‘for’ women and Māori.

Another critique of his work has been that it is autobiographical, and while much of it is, entwined with the personal is a wider social history in a complex interweaving between the two. I suggest that because the two are so finely interwoven, the political and historical depth of his writing has often been overlooked. Thompson was aware of this criticism and addressed it himself,

About seven months ago, I was operated on for cancer. I immediately set about writing *Passing Through*, a solo play which is a kind of farewell to theatre. Initially performed by myself, *Passing Through* is also intended as a vehicle for other performers. On one level it is an account of a personal journey across thirty years of theatre. On another it is a political play. Behind the Performer loom the politics of theatre; behind them, the larger politics of New Zealand itself (Thompson 1991: 47).

As Benjamin argued,

To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was’ (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at the moment of danger ... Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins ... (Benjamin 1992: 247).

Thompson sought to tell the stories of the marginalised and worked against New Zealand theatre being dependent on European models, believing in theatre that was grounded in its community. Like Brecht he believed that the role of theatre was to “shed light on reality, not only to reflect and to interpret reality, but to try to change it” (Schechter 1985: 158).

Marxism is a scientific theory of human societies and of the practice of transforming them; and what that means, rather more concretely, is that the narrative Marxism has to deliver is the story of the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression. There is nothing academic about those struggles, and we forget this at our cost (Eagleton 1976: vii).

Influences on Thompson's Theatre Practice and Theory:

Thompson engaged in praxis, the making of performance and the reflection on that work and his own influences within it,

I think it is worth pointing out that I write from the perspective of the working class, and that my work therefore contains certain things that may create embarrassment in those from other class backgrounds. I have never, for instance, been ashamed of what the middle classes call sentimentality, or frightened of what they label rhetoric ... Brecht is there, of course ... But so are Artaud, the *Marat/Sade*, Story Theatre, improvisational workshops, contemporary film, my own *O! Temperance!* and, perhaps above all, the Royal Shakespeare Company's presentation of *Nicholas Nickleby*. And perhaps it is not too late to suggest that working class influences might also be present, most notably from Sean O'Casey and, of course, John A. Lee himself (1990: 9-10).

In this list of influences on his work, Thompson does not include Bruce Mason who is acknowledged as the first New Zealand playwright to believe in the value of Aotearoa New Zealand culture and to portray it on the stage. Mason worked for the development of a national theatre and was committed to supporting biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand being the first to utilise theatre as a catalyst for social issues.

Thompson's theatre was political theatre, and whether directly influenced by him or not, one of his ancestor's was Piscator. Brecht studied and worked with

Piscator, and his later use of the words epic and scientific were coined from Piscator's invention of a new stage for a new age, which included film, slide projection and stage machinery.

For Piscator, who labelled himself a 'historical materialist', and defined the standpoint of his theatre as 'an *absolute* historical-philosophical recognition – that of the *Marxist doctrine*', social classes were super-individuals, motivated by economic determination and historical forces ... Drama based on the clash of character seemed trivial where conflict was between classes or nations (Innes 1972: 123).

Piscator worked to overcome the difficulty of presenting undifferentiated figures, experimenting with actors changing roles during a performance and the use of masks as ways to present the masses and individuals. In *Songs to the Judges* Thompson used generic titles for the actors, designated as A, B, C and D, where A and D represented Māori and B and C Pākehā. Piscator aimed to turn the spectators into a legislative body,

It was the stage's ambition to supply images, statistics, slogans which would enable its parliament, the audience, to reach political decisions. Piscator's stage was not indifferent to applause, but it preferred a discussion. It didn't want to provide its spectator with an experience but also to squeeze from him a practical decision to intervene actively in life (Schechter 1985: 5).

In *Songs to the Judges* Thompson did accomplish Piscator's ambition to merge courtroom and theatre, where the play is literally set in a courtroom and the spectators become in effect the jury, making their own judgements and decisions. This was also a fulfilment of Brecht's plan to, "start a new theatre in Berlin which would be devoted

exclusively to the staging of famous courtroom trials” (Schechter 1985: 191). Brecht spoke of his plan to stage trial theatre to Sergei Tretyakov in 1932, who noted that this was a development of a, “tendency already evident in his plays; namely, his endeavors to create drama as convincing as court pleas and teach audiences to reach a verdict, “transforming the spectator’s chair into that of the judge” (Schechter 1985: 192). During his exile Brecht became more mocking and ironical in his work regarding justice, often portraying the court as a farce, for example in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

Walter Benjamin defines Brecht’s *Epic Theatre* as a theatre that seeks a relaxed ‘smoking’ audience, able to think, reason and to react to the play, being different from tragedy by not creating suspense for the audience. *Epic Theatre* seeks to unveil the contradictions in society through the use of dialectics and is non-Aristotelian, not aiming for catharsis and a purging of emotions in the audience. At the close of Thompson’s *Children of the Poor* the Chorus ask, “Is there Nothing that can be Changed!!!?” Can theatre make change in society? In personal lives? Can it have the effect of consciousness raising? Boal argues that,

the poetics of Aristotle is the *poetics of oppression*: the world is known, perfect or about to be perfected, and all its values are imposed on the spectators, who passively delegate power to the characters to act and think in their place. ...[whereas in] Brecht’s poetics ... the world is revealed as subject to change, and the change starts in the theatre itself, for the spectator does not delegate power to the characters to think in his place ... Perhaps the theatre is not

revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution! (Boal 1974: 155).

Epic Theatre emphasises the representation of social relations and the telling of a story, with repeated interruptions, and has an aim to instruct and entertain. Based on the actor's gestures which are quotable; that is, able to be repeated, it is a gestic theatre, where the actors demonstrate their roles rather than becoming them, so they can critique their characters at the same time as playing them. The form of *Epic Theatre* is a juxtaposition of short scenes that cut between different moods and topics, with the aim of creating a shock effect, or alienation effect, for the spectator. Thompson utilised Brechtian techniques in *Songs to the Judges* with songs often sung harshly against the grain of the music; historicization³; direct address to the audience; scenic montage⁴; actors playing different roles with no continuity of character; ensemble playing and the use of chorus; the use of generic titles not individual names with the protagonists being working class; and the use of *gestus*⁵.

Like Brecht, whose performances revealed the contradictions in social situations and institutions, Thompson wanted to bring to the attention of New

³ A method of analysing the present through the performance of a different historical time and/or place. This enables spectators to reflect on a particular social system from another social system's point of view and make comparisons, creating distance with the purpose of breaking empathy, and so allowing the spectator to observe and be critical so that they have a capacity for action in their own lives, for example, *St Joan* is set in far off Chicago (for a European audience).

⁴ The juxtaposition of short scenes that do not necessarily flow into one another but clash (in style or content or both) and which draw attention to the construction of the performance.

⁵ Based on social actions that are repeatable, movement often being copied from life but reduced to show the essence of the character's social reality.

Zealanders their history and the stories of the marginalised. In a letter to his parents in 1835 Büchner set out a theory of dramatic art which has ‘historicization’ at its centre, that through the telling of the past people can see ‘what happens in human life around them’,

The dramatic poet is, in my eyes, nothing but a writer of history, except that he stands above the latter in that he creates history for the second time; he transplants us directly into the life of another time ... The poet is no teacher of morals; he invents and creates characters, he brings the past back to life, and from this people may learn as though from the study of history itself and the observation of it, what happens in human life around them (Mueller 1963: xviii).

In this we can see Büchner’s influence on Brecht and in turn on Thompson. The programme for *Scrim* stated, “The return of SONGS TO UNCLE SCRIM provides a timely reminder that what happened ‘Then’ can always happen again” (1991).

Eagleton claims that art can transcend the ideological limits of its time and reveal the realities which ideology hides⁶. In his essay ‘ideology and ideological state apparatuses’ Althusser claims that literature contributes to ‘reproducing the relations of production’ which are the social relations necessary for the continuation of capitalist production and that,

Literature contains the myths and imaginary images of real social relationships which make up ideology. In theatre, naturalism, with its emphasis on empathy, puts the viewer in the place of the character as ‘the subject’ in the play (and in) ideology (Belsey 1985: 45).

⁶ Eagleton Terry. *Ideology: An Introduction*, London: Verso, 1978.

Ideology is not imposed from above, but is the beliefs of people, upon which they act, “It is a set of omissions, gaps rather than lies, smoothing over contradictions, appearing to provide answers to questions which in reality it evades” (Belsey1985: 46).

In analysing how Thompson utilised Brechtian principles, it is useful to examine two of Brecht’s plays as examples, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1929-31) written in the same period as his *Lehrstücke*, and *Mother Courage* (1939) written in exile in Sweden. In *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, in which song and chorus are utilised, the central characters are given names, for example, Mauler, Cridle, and Joan, whilst the other characters, or chorus, have generic names, for example, The Workers, The Newsboys, The Black Straw Hats and The Meat Packers. By giving generic names to the roles, Brecht converts the character from a subject, back into an object of social forces, where social being determines thought, and not vice versa. The play exposes how the business world, in particular the Meat Exchange and Meat Packers, operates and how its politics and economics effect the workers, disclosing the hegemony in capitalist society. As Joan says,

If their wickedness is beyond measure, then
 So is their poverty. Not the wickedness of the poor
 Have you shown me, but
The poverty of the poor

(Brecht 1976: 30).

Brecht constructs the juxtaposition of the scenes from the perspectives of the different classes in a dialectical manner. Scene 1 is from The Meat King Mauler’s

perspective, scene 2 from The Worker's perspective and scene 2c from The Black Straw Hat's perspective. Brecht argued that for the modern scientific age the writer must abandon their mythical view of man in favour of an historical perspective⁷. Brecht exposes how after the Wall Street crash of 1929 capitalists ensured that a communist revolution would never again threaten them. Brecht points out why and how the system moves from a free market with its fallibilities to a corporate system, and by analogy, why the Communist rising in Germany fell. Here, the use of historicization is one way of communicating to the audience what Brecht is articulating in the *Messingkauf Dialogues*,

THE PHILOSOPHER: Allow me to tell you that the millions who are in danger and misery have no idea what the causes of that danger and misery may be. There is however a considerable minority that has quite a good idea ... The persecutors can only be got rid of once enough people understand the causes of their dangers and miseries, and the way things really happen, and how to get rid of the persecutors. So it's a question of communicating this understanding to as large a number as possible (Brecht 1965: 30).

Development of the 'Songplay'

Thompson sought to expose how the dominant ideology is perpetuated, internalised, and used by those in power to keep the masses misinformed and dependent. He wrote from a standpoint against that ideology bringing its politics and philosophies to his writing. The form he utilised contributed to the content and this form sought to shock spectators into questioning and thinking, so that they could

complete the process of the play in their lives outside the theatre. *Songs to the Judges* is not naturalistic, it is a songplay, a song and a play, a sung play. Naming it a songplay implies that the performance is interdisciplinary with actors, singers and musicians and Thompson utilises ballads, songs, hymns, satire, dance, monologue and dialect, following Brecht's advice to invite all the,

sister arts of the drama, not in order to create an 'integrated work of art' in which they all offer themselves up and are lost, but so that together with the drama they may further the common task in their different ways; and their relations with one another consist in this: that they lead to mutual alienation (Brecht 1964: 204).

Thompson's first play, *First Return*, was a confessional work, written in isolation in England. It is based on autobiographical material and was influenced by: expressionism, Strindberg, Munch, Fellini's *8 1/2* and *Death of a Salesman*. In this three act play Thompson's later style is being developed, the characters do not build a personality, there is direct address to the audience, music and chorus, and a grotesque juxtaposition of humour and cruelty. However, as Sebastian Black points out, the dark fairy tale has another strand interwoven, that of music hall and circus, "They are based on nineteenth century working class entertainments, which the largely naturalist middle-class theatre has disdained" (Black 1984: 12).

Having confessed, Thompson's second play was based historically on the Temperance movement in New Zealand in 1919, the politics of which split the country. *O! Temperance!* (1972) is a semi-documentary play, with music. Written in two acts it

was created in collaboration with the actors and features chorus, slides, hymns and original music composed by Lizzie Cook. To produce art collectively is to abolish the artist as elitist and privileged, in his poem *On the Everyday Theatre* Brecht posited, “He is an artist because a man” (Boal 1979: 109). In this performance New Zealander’s could recognise themselves represented on the stage. It exposed the hypocrisy and contradictions of the police force, the law and parliament in relation to the brewery industry and was linked to the emancipation movement for women in Aotearoa New Zealand. Thompson acknowledged it as a ‘light entertainment’, but hoped audiences would be “stirred by a chapter of history which has been largely ignored by our historians but which, like the abortion issue or the Springbok tour, once had the power to split the country down the middle” (Thompson 1984: 71). He claimed that the losers are written out of the history books, but kept alive in the oral tradition, “It is my belief that any public rekindling of ‘non-official’ or ‘repressed’ history of this type becomes a political act, even in a play as light-hearted as this. In a land that prefers to keep things in the dark, to shine a torch anywhere, even in fun, is to impel recognition beyond the material one presents” (1984: 71).

All the same any production which fails to *move* its audience is not doing its job. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the elements of melodrama and sentimentality which are evident in the way the temperance workers dramatise themselves, a strong emotional involvement should be sought from the audience (Thompson 1984: 71).

Here Thompson articulates the double strand that winds through his plays, that of the didactic mixed with entertainment. Brecht also did not seek to deprive the audience of all emotion,

Neither the public nor the actor must be stopped from taking part emotionally; the representation of emotions must not be hampered, nor must the actor's use of emotions be frustrated. Only one out of many possible sources of emotion needs to be left unused, or at least treated as a subsidiary source – empathy” (Brecht 1965: 57).

Like Brecht, Thompson re-writes history from different perspectives, “imagine a man standing in a valley and making a speech in which he occasionally changes his views or simply utter sentences which contradict one another, so that the accompanying echo forces them into confrontation” (Brecht 1964: 191). This technique encourages the audience to put together causes and effects and to question if causes are individually or socially constructed, and to ask how the individual is affected by social constructs. Thompson also stressed ‘role playing’ with the actors playing more than one role, which created an alienating effect by stopping the audience identifying with any one character, and empathizing with an individual, and also destroying the ‘star’ system. This style was developed in *Songs to Uncle Scrim*.

Ten years after *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* Brecht wrote *Mother Courage* (1939) while he was in exile in Sweden. Set in Sweden during the 30 years war in the 1600s and written as a warning to Scandinavia not to be drawn into the Second World War it was not staged until 1941, when it was too late to be effective. *Mother Courage*

makes use of generic names, for instance; Soldiers, Peasants, The Cook and The Chaplain. The play jumps large amounts of time, covering twelve years of the thirty year war with each scene complete unto itself, with a clear beginning and end.

Thompson through his plays has warned the population of Aotearoa New Zealand. In *Songs to the Judges* that warning is, “*unless social, economic, legal and cultural justice, incorporating the deepest Maori concepts and concerns, is made available to the Maori people of New Zealand, the vision of the final song will never even begin to be realised*” (Song No 19).

It is with *Songs to Uncle Scrim* (1976) that Thompson made a structural shift in the form of his playscripts. He was inspired by Raymond Hawthorne’s production of *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* which was comprised of ‘a number of songs put together’, “What would happen, I wondered, if the Brel formula were applied to a New Zealand theme, but applied with more rigour – so as to form not just an entertainment but a play?” (Thompson 1984: 117). Using material he had begun in 1973 based on the Depression, *Scrim* was written utilising the form of a collection of songs, with music by Stephen McCurdy, for the South Pacific Arts Festival in Rotorua.

The generic title “songplay” I coined much later – to mean simply a set of original songs grouped uncompromisingly round a theme, placed in a logical and coherent order to create a strong sense of narrative, and allowing the establishment of character (Thompson 1984: 117).

In *Scrim* Thompson is working with a dialectical principle, where each song comes at the topic from a different point of view and contrasts are built into the form of the play,

Much of the effect of *Scrim* lies in its juxtapositions. Each statement, thematic or musical, is immediately followed by another which comes at the material from a different angle. The contrasts are there for a purpose and should be played for all they are worth. Comedy gives way to pathos, the harsh edge of social comment to satire; songs which generalise to ones which explore specifics; the lyrics of frustration to those of savage social and economic conflict; songs which emphasise individual character to those which recreate larger historical actions (Thompson 1984: 117–18).

Marxist critic Georg Lukacs believes that artistic form is not a quirk of the individual, that form is historically determined by the kind of content it embodies and that the true bearers of ideology in art are the very forms⁸, whilst Walter Benjamin argues that the revolutionary artist should be concerned with the means of production, not just the art object, and should not uncritically accept the existing forces of artistic production, but develop those forces and so create new social relations between artist and audience⁹. Marx's dialectic contains in its positive understanding of what exists, a simultaneous recognition of its negation and this use of oppositions is the backbone of Brecht's *Epic Theatre*, in which Brecht used montage, the juxtaposition of scenes to allow the spectator to confront the shifting views performed. In Thompson's songplays we see the juxtaposition of songs in such a way as to comment on each other, exposing to the audience the processes, the causes and effects of social circumstances, and creating for the audience a dynamic way of experiencing the relationship. This form of

⁸ Eagleton 1976: 21.

⁹ Eagleton 1976: 61.

joining pieces of a script or film together Eisenstein termed horizontal montage. The linking of images and sound requires an understanding of the rhythm of both music and visual depiction and these do not necessarily align, for example, sound can continue unimpeded whilst the image is cut. In his songplays this is what Thompson is doing, added to the horizontal montage of the narrative is the layer of music, which dramaturgical technique Eisenstein named 'vertical montage'. In *O! Temperance!* Thompson creates an alienation effect between the music and the lyrics by deliberately mixing music that is faithful to the historical period of the play with the use of lyrical anachronism, "When music and words are brought together, the irony and counterpoint with which the work abounds is made even clearer" (Thompson 1984: 118).

Text Analysis of *Songs to the Judges*

Songs to the Judges was first performed at the Maidment Summer Theatre in Auckland on 13 February 1980. It called for a bicultural cast and was the most political and controversial of Thompson's plays being composed of 19 songs based on the law courts and the way they have impinged on Māori; and on Māori protest.

If Gestus invites us to think about the performer and the spectator in their historical and sexual specificity, it also asks us to consider the author's inscription. The author's attitude to the public, that of the era represented and of the time in which the play is performed, the collective style of acting of the characters, etc., are a few of the parameters of the basic *Gestus* (Pavis 1982: 42).

This invitation of *gestus* applies not only to historical and sexual specificity but also to race. Writers seeking to reclaim the erasure of the Māori perspective of history were compelled to do so in English because of the almost total loss of Māori language. In *Songs to the Judges* Thompson recovers the marginalised histories of Māori protest, from the passive resistance of Parihaka to that of Bastion Point. This text that is structured as a dialogue between Māori and Pākehā, song by song, is a play about colonisation and protest against that colonisation. Whilst each song is told from a different perspective, the overall bias is from the viewpoint of the marginalised, exploited and oppressed in this land of equal opportunity and bicultural representation. One of the themes in *Songs to the Judges* is the exposing of the processes of cultural imperialism as they applied in Aoteroa New Zealand,

Usurping the people's natural resources, destroying their economic and agricultural self-sufficiency, placing the children in foreign educational environments, devaluing the language community, and interfering with the generational transmission of spiritual knowledge are all common strategies of cultural imperialism (Darder 1995a: 3).

The first song, *Ahi Kaa*¹⁰, presents a view of the land from the indigenous perspective. Said¹¹ argues that it is difficult to connect the involvement of culture with empire, to make critiques of art and its politics, but Thompson does this in *Songs to the Judges*, by using the Gilbert and Sullivan form, which was popular entertainment in the 1880s in Aotearoa New Zealand. By using this form of music he very purposefully sets

¹⁰ Burning fires.

¹¹ Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism*.

the art form within an historical context of colonisation, where the art form itself played a role in colonisation, “At some very basic level, imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others” (Said 1994: 5). *Songs to the Judges* sets itself on this very basic level of the land and the human battles over it in the South Pacific, focusing on specific instances of the taking of land and resistance to that taking. The play questions values, such as justice and liberty, investigating their definition and revealing that they are words for concepts that are not immutable but in flux. Thompson maintains that,

More than most writers, I believe in the continuity between the writer and his or her work. As I wrote in the *Listener* in April 1984: *Every play or book I have ever written is a cry against oppression. The theme of all my work is the need for justice for those who have no power and no voice* (1991: 37).

In a review in *The Listener* Michael Neil reports,

Both *Scrim* and *Judges* work the song-play idiom that Thompson has made peculiarly his own: *Judges* shows how far his craft has advanced in the four years that separate them. It seems to me the most powerful thing he has done ... at a time when even liberal Pakeha historians are attacked for expropriating the Maori past, the theatre can hardly expect immunity ... Indeed, Thompson’s subject is the history of the chicanery, the patronising incomprehension, and the sheer failure of imagination which have brought us to a condition verging on spiritual apartheid. The miserable slapstick of the Governor-General’s Balaclava-like charge at Waitangi just a week before *Judges* opened, was a perfect enactment of its theme ...

Structure of the text of *Songs to the Judges*

Songs to the Judges includes both a construction and deconstruction of colonial discourse. It first sets up colonial history, for instance, the second scene details the list of Acts passed by Parliament to de-land and de-communalise Māori iwi. 'We Think You Ought To Die', the title of which was taken from a newspaper headline, is sung by the Pākehā actors and can be found shocking for its non-political correctness in contemporary society, but only one hundred years ago, was believed,

So when you greet your doom,
As inevitably you must,
May the heavens ring with this noble theme:
The Pakeha was Just.

The second half of the play deconstructs the colonial discourse, where Māori protest and make a stand in acts of decolonization. Thompson's play traces the processes of colonisation through to decolonization/resistance and is in itself a discourse analysis, the text offering ways to engage with colonial discourse through its analysis of historic events and stories.

The text is structured dialectically with the first song sung by and from a Māori perspective, the second sung by and from a Pākehā perspective. The Oxford dictionary defines 'dialectic' as the, 'art of investigating the truth of opinions, testing of truth by discussion ... existence or action of opposing social forces' (1982: 264). The songs are structured so that the perspectives of Māori and Pākehā are voiced back to back on different issues becoming a form of debate between opposing social forces.

This structure is similar in form to music hall with its juxtaposition of short acts, and question and answer dialogue. However, Thompson has at the same time created a bicultural structure, where these similarities link to a European lineage, but also to a Māori lineage in the form of whai kōrero, or debate. On the marae whai kōrero is integral to the ritual of encounter¹² where tangata whenua and manuhiri speak alternately on the paepae¹³ and each speech is followed by a waiata¹⁴. I argue that the text of *Songs to the Judges* has a bicultural structure, being able to be read as both Pākehā and Māori. The form of utuutu in the ritual of encounter, is embedded in the form of the text, which is a juxtaposition of autonomous scenes that comment on each other and has resonances with Büchner, as Müller argues,

Büchner's method in *Woyzeck* and *Danton* is the same: juxtaposition of scenes ... As in the Epic Theatre of Brecht, who owes his greatest debt to Büchner, each scene is virtually autonomous, yet when assembled they constitute a seemingly indissoluble whole. Each scene works with the others and comments implicitly upon them (1963: xxiv).

In the 1998 production the first song, *Ahi Kaa*, was sung by the Māori actors.

The first word in the stage directions is 'Land' and this is the central theme of *Songs to the Judges*. The song tells how tribal land was traditionally gained and retained by ahi kaa, the burning of fires. The text begins in te reo Māori and is then translated into

¹² The rituals of encounter are described in the chapter on Environmental Theatre and I am indebted to Anne Salmond's book *Hui*, 1975 for this information.

¹³ The paepae is the orator's bench.

¹⁴ This structure of the order of speaking on the marae ātea is not universal for all iwi, but for a large percentage this alternating form is used, and is called utuutu, where the order of speaking swings between tangata whenua (hosts) and manuhiri (guests).

English, “*Take taunaha! I discover the land!*” The last verse is a modified version of words spoken by Chief Seattle¹⁵ leader of the Duwamish and Suquamish tribes in the United States, linking Māori and American Indian attitudes towards the land as first world peoples. The play was written four years after the first international meeting of First World Peoples.

The second song, *The Law Song*, was sung by the Pākehā actors in response to *Ahi Kaa*. *The Law Song* lists Acts of Parliament that legalised the sale or confiscation of Māori land.

These two songs form an historical dialectic, in that they spell out from both perspectives how change occurred from the tribal ownership or control of land, through the process of imperialism and colonisation to the individual ownership of land by Pākehā. This change was facilitated through the Justice system by passing Laws to make it illegal for group or communal (iwi) ownership of land, endorsing individual title, because it was easier to negotiate a sale with one person than with many.

Thompson’s contextualization cleverly implies a relatively sophisticated binarism between Maori concepts of time and land with European linearity and acquisition. The chronological progression of dates signals not only points along an historical narrative (wherein Maori land was dispossessed), but a series of movements in time which, from the European point of view, spells progression, a division of land into profitable sections (Boire 1991: 22).

¹⁵ Note: there is debate about the spelling of his name. Noah Seattle was his Catholic baptised name, See-at-la, the anglicised pronunciation in the Lushootseed dialect; with other possibilities of Sealth and See-Yahtlh.

The dialectic between the songs continues until ‘Gather Up The Earth’ which is sung by all the actors. This was Te Whiti’s response to the passive resisters who were killed away from their home marae, and buried elsewhere¹⁶. Verse four is in te reo Māori. Up until this point, the structure of the play has alternated between Māori and Pākehā. This is not a question and answer format between individual characters that is a dialogue, but a speech and response song by song, in monologues or chorus, as would be the format on the marae. In ‘Gather Up The Earth’ Māori and Pākehā sing together, the Pākehā becoming part of the iwi group. This change in the structure of the songplay signals a change in the content. The next song shifts from the history of colonisation in the nineteenth century to the beginning of the Māori renaissance in the 1970s, jumping eighty years into the contemporary political context of Thompson himself, four years before he wrote the play. The final song, ‘On that Day’, again brings Māori and Pākehā together in a vision of justice and unity, with much of the text taken directly from Te Whiti’s teachings.

At the end of *Songs to the Judges* there is a moment of harmony, where Te Whiti’s vision of the two races meeting in reconciliation is portrayed. After this moment of reconciliation, conflict is reinstated, “At the end they form two distinct groups, Maori and pakeha, staring at each other uneasily across space. The vision has gone; what remains is separation, hostility, guilt and regret” (1979: notes), the actors

¹⁶ It is customary in Māori culture to be buried on one’s home marae with one’s ancestors.

split into Pākehā and Māori groups and face each other across the length of the space as coloniser and colonised, master and slave, dominating and dominated. The end is left open with no final solution offered, where Brecht's comment, "I like carefully weighing the pros and cons of everything I see and putting my own oar in. There's a certain pleasurable doubt in me" (1965: 18) could be applied to how Thompson worked this playscript.

Language

At least sixteen different forms of language are intermixed in the construction of the nineteen songs in *Songs to the Judges*. Te reo Māori begins the play, followed by high court rhetoric and the ritualised language and complex jargon of the law. Into this Song is added part of a speech by Chief Seattle of the Duwamish League, as is also Queen's English in the speech "Know the Governor is authorised". 'We think You Ought To Die' is quoted verbatim from the title of a newspaper article and in 'Gather Up The Earth' Greek myth and the Bible are cited. The chant in te reo Māori from the Matakite Land March is used for Song No 8¹⁷. 'The Raglan Golf Course Dispute' includes a hymn in te reo Māori and 'A New Kind of Song' features *10 Guitars*, a popular song by Howard Morrison. 'Marlene' is based on interview material conducted by Thompson, and 'Scales of Justice' uses the form of music hall. 'I Spit on Your Court' is based on a real court case as was 'The Raglan Golf Course Dispute'. A

¹⁷ Translated into te reo Māori for the Land March from the poem by T. Bracken, *Not Understood*.

haka is performed in 'Its Coming', juxtaposed to an operatic aria and choir in 'Point of No Return'. Finally in 'On That Day' Te Whiti's words are quoted and the song is also influenced by Martin Luther King.

Thompson's songplay is a mix of different languages, a microcosm of the bicultural world in which we live enacting the heteroglossia of culture in Aotearoa New Zealand, "Heteroglossia is Bakhtin's way of referring, in any utterance of any kind, to the peculiar interaction between the two fundamentals of all communication" (Holquist 1981: xix). In Bakhtin's theory of language centrifugal and centripetal forces work in opposition to each other, centripetal forces working for a unification of language and centrifugal to destabilising, adding to, and becoming a mix of many,

At any given moment ... a language is stratified not only into dialects in the strict sense of the word ... but is ... stratified as well into languages that are socio-ideological: languages belonging to professions, to genres, languages peculiar to particular generations, etc. This stratification and diversity of speech will spread wider and penetrate to ever deeper levels so long as language is alive and still in the process of becoming (Holquist 1981: xix).

Bakhtin claims that language is linked to ideology where, "Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language" (Bakhtin 1981: 270). Here language is seen as ideologically saturated, and representing a worldview. A uniting language expresses the forces working in society to centralization, "The victory of one language over others, as being the one language of truth, which

incorporates the barbarians, into a unitary “language of culture and truth” (Bakhtin 1981: 271).

But the centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a “uniting language”, operate in the midst of heteroglossia ... the uninterrupted process of decentralization and disunification go forward ... these two processes intersect in the utterance, which is contradiction laden. Tension filled these two battling entities move in and out, unified and ununified. The environment of an utterance is dialogical heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981: 271-2).

Songs to the Judges can be interpreted as written in a language that is opposed to the unitary, authoritarian national language of the Court and Parliament. It is parodic, aimed against these languages. It is heteroglossia that has been dialogised. Bakhtin notes that, “Real ideologically saturated ‘language consciousness’... participates in actual heteroglossia and multi-languedness” (274), including oral traditions which are frequently the ‘carriers of the decentralizing tendencies in the life of language’. He points out that proper theoretical recognition has not been common in verbal parodies, in ‘not talking straight’ and in “complex forms for the organization of contradiction, forms that orchestrate their themes by means of languages” (1981: 275).

Parody and Satire

Thompson’s utilisation of Gilbert and Sullivan and music hall is in itself a ‘parodic take’ on colonialism, where the establishment of European culture and civilisation was consolidated by the erection of theatre as one of the colonising institutions in which European drama was re-presented for the settlers. Theatres were

built that imitated those in Europe and plays were imported as a validation of the culture of the settlers - performance by Europeans for Europeans reflecting their values back to them. Little or no account was taken of the indigenous performance forms, apart from their exotic quaintness or wild nativeness. Political satire is not common on the stage in Aotearoa New Zealand, although,

The tradition has antecedents as old as Aristophanic satire and Atellan farce, but its modern political consciousness comes from Marx, Brecht and Mayakovsky. Not everyone would consider Karl Marx a satirist, of course; but, as Walter Benjamin notes, Marx became a teacher of satire through his theory of dialectical materialism and, 'it is with Marx that Brecht has gone to school'" (Schechter 1985: 32).

The above writers have influenced political theatre in the twentieth century, producing theatre which often has imperialism and the military as its point of target. In Brecht's theatre events were seen from the perspective of different classes, "Valentin's parody of the 'continuity of ego' has within it its opposite premise, that of materialist dialectics, which states that every historically developed form is in a state of change" (Schechter 1985: 34). Terry Eagleton argues that irony and dialectical theory are inseparable, "Contradictions are a joke not because they are not often intolerable, but because without the dialectic which is, so to speak, the ironic wit of history, there could be no significant life at all. History, as it were, is comic in form ... For Marxism, history moves under the very sign of irony ... The only reason for being a Marxist is to get to the point where you can stop being one ..." (Schechter 1985: 39).

In *Songs to the Judges* Thompson's use of the Gilbert and Sullivan form is consciously making use of parody. Bakhtin asks what it is that makes parody distinctive as a form, as the parody of a sonnet is not a genre, the sonnet itself is the 'hero of the parody'. The sonnet is the 'object of representation! "For a parody of the sonnet to work, the reader or listener, must first be able to recognise the form of a sonnet. The parody may make fun of the features of the sonnet, but the result is not a sonnet but the 'image of a sonnet!'. Parody and irony are ways to make fun of the straightforward word being verbal forms that ridicule the serious world, "The importance of parodic-travestying forms in world literature is enormous" (Bakhtin 1981: 52). Irony is an alternative to rhetorical assault but speaking the dominant or enemy's language can be easily mis-read, as often happened in *Songs to the Judges* when the parodic language was read as straight.

Thus it is that in parody two languages are crossed with each other, as well as two styles, two linguistic points of view, and in the final analysis two speaking subjects. It is true that only one of these languages (the one that is parodied) is present in its own right; the other is present invisibly, as an actualizing background for creating and perceiving. Parody is an intentional hybrid ...

Every type of intentional stylistic hybrid is more or less dialogised. This means that the languages that are crossed in it relate to each other as do rejoinders in a dialogue; there is an argument between languages, an argument between styles of language. But it is not a dialogue in the narrative sense, nor in the abstract sense; rather it is a dialogue between points of view, each with its own concrete language that cannot be translated into the other.

Thus every parody is an intentional dialogised hybrid. Within it, languages and styles actively and mutually illuminate one another (Bakhtin 1981: 76).

Bakhtin sees language as being double voiced or plural. When irony is used it is a deliberate manipulation of language which is the same, but different, it is plural. And Thompson utilised language in just this way. A hybrid construction contains two different languages, two belief systems. *Songs to the Judges* is an intentional hybridisation of language. In organic hybridity, the two merge and fuse into a new language, or object, but “Intentional hybridity sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure, which retains ‘a certain elemental, organic energy and openendedness’” (361). Intentional hybridity has a political agenda, “setting ... cultural differences against each other dialogically” (Young: 22). Bakhtin argues that the voice of authority is always singular, authoritative, and that the hybrid, doubled, voice undoes the single voice of Sovereignty. *Songs to the Judges* displays intentional hybridity, not merging languages but setting them against each other.

Representing the rituals of the law is a parodic reversal, a mirror with special reflections (Brecht). By turning the trial into a Gilbert and Sullivan play, it is defamiliarised or made strange, so that the audience can look anew at the rituals of the law. The play exposes to the audience the workings of mystifying state controls. The trial is “one of our culture’s most familiar ritualistic actions ... where justice must be seen to be done” (Boire 1991: 16). The spectacle of the trial is an excellent way to dramatise the colonial struggle. The law, in its role of administering justice, “can’t help but be a violent codification of self-interest. As such, hermeneutic disputes about

it can't help but be political struggles. As Thompson pointedly remarks in *Judges*, 'Once in a generation/the gavel turns into a gun'" (Boire 1991: 17). The carnivalesque reversal of parody pulls apart the law's search for the black/white, guilty/not guilty, exposing contradictions, using double meanings and punning.

The Law is a written construct. Fanon posits that language both creates and maintains colonialism, religious and literary texts create a cultural net and impose value systems, "Colonial law represents a crystallization of all these ideological values" (Boire 1991: 17). The law sets rules and values in written language, an act of writing as opposed to an act of speaking. Thompson in gathering oral stories was undercutting this written construct with an oral version of history. *Songs to the Judges* is an anti-colonial deconstruction of the law, as the central authority in the land, "colonial/capitalist law emerges as perhaps the most powerful of textualities – an encoding of class violence under the guise of social contract" (Boire 1991: 17).

Thompson may have been influenced in writing *Songs to the Judges* by George Ryga's play *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (1970) which he saw a year earlier. Ryga's play uses the trial to expose the colonisation of the indigenous people. Performed at the New Independent Theatre in Auckland it used Māori actors in place of Native Canadians. This is in itself a questionable practice, are Canadian Indians interchangeable with Māori, do 'they' all look the same? Problems of representation come to the fore, actors represent another, why can that not be another gender or race?

As Balme points out, receptive codes will determine how syncretised texts are received in a cross-cultural situation.

Boire argues that Thompson's counter-discourse is subtly deceptive,

On one level the song-cycle seems a coarse and abrasive progression of vitriolic invectives: New Zealand history unfolds in 19 songs as a relentless series of unvaried colonial exploitations. The law is associated variously with a mish-mash of oppressive ideological discourses: missionary Christianity ... But within the multiple folds of this deceptively simple name-calling Thompson's script moves into a revolutionary and typically anti-colonial linguistic activity: a ferociously angry form of polyphonic jesting (1991: 19).

One example of this jesting is the punning on the word *urupa* in 'The Raglan Golf Course Dispute'. The Māori word *urupa* means burial ground, but when mispronounced in English sounds like *Europa*, a brand of petrol and a word for Europe. This scene suggests Europe has buried Māori values, but it can also be read as Europe being a tomb of irrelevant values. The pun cuts both ways. "Thompson's polyphony, in other words, contains the possibility of multiple readings, a pluralism that borders the edge of linguistic and meaningful anarchy" (Boire 1991: 20).

Documentary Theatre

Songs to the Judges is a collection of writing including songs and oral and personal histories where the particular gives enlightenment to the general. Thompson was adamant about the personal being political insisting that everybody's personal story played a part in making history. Thompson stated that *Songs to the Judges* was the play with the least of his own input, the playscript being comprised of stories from

people throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, from Acts of Parliament, and from newspapers, being a form of documentary theatre. In the 'Introduction' Thompson explains:

In some ways it was easy. I spoke to Maori people ranging from Pauline Kingi and George Tait to a person I know simply as Marlene, a remarkable young inmate of the Bollard Girls' Home ... I also read avidly and widely. Writers of fiction such as Rowley Habib, Witi Ihimaera ... historians like Judith Binney and Dick Scott. There was no lack of material, and as for eloquence that was already there in abundance: Te Whiti's words, for instance, were sublime poetic architectures which fell quite naturally into lyric form.

The use of reported texts in the creation of a playscript can be traced back to Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* which was based on a court case. *Woyzeck* is documentary drama, the text being taken largely verbatim from a trial. *Woyzeck* is the first working class tragedy, and is steeped in class dynamics, as too is Thompson's work. As a precursor of postmodern theatre, *Woyzeck* is non linear, with an open ended structure, fractured identity, monologue, and uses dialect. Like *Woyzeck Songs to the Judges* is grounded in social criticism and injustice. Büchner was one of the first playwrights to bring attention to the economic factor in society, based on a real life trial, there is evidence that Buchner intended the last scene to be the trial scene to show the travesty of justice, as Brecht later incorporated trial scenes into his plays. Brecht suggested, "We might perhaps take genuine court cases out of the law reports and rehearse them, or something of that sort" (1965: 37). Thompson used real life court material for two of the songs in *Songs to the Judges* and the whole play is set in a law court where the

spectators become the jury. "Writing about his 1932 conversations with Bertolt Brecht, the Soviet author Sergei Tretyakov reported that Brecht planned to start a new theatre in Berlin which would be devoted exclusively to the staging of famous courtroom trials" (Schechter 1985: 191). Brecht wanted his theatre to function like a courtroom where the audience reach a conclusion, a verdict about the happenings, so, "transforming the spectator's chair into that of the judge" (Schechter 1985: 192) naming it "trial theatre".

Büchner was a precursor of Marx, Brecht and the deconstructionalist movement of the twentieth century. By incorporating text from various sources into *Woyzeck* the author is minimalised, creating a montage of universal discourse juxtaposed in a disharmonious manner. Thompson also borrows text from other sources, creating a montage of discourse juxtaposed disharmoniously. The idea of documentary drama, of a collection of texts, put together in a pastiche is a postmodern construction,

Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination (Barthes 1977: 148).

My claim that *Songs to the Judges* is an example of early postmodernism in Aotearoa New Zealand will be further developed in relation to the playscript and the way that it was composed.

In the 1920s when documentary drama was popular, Brecht interrogated the idea of the document as a construction, by questioning the idea of authenticity. “As early as 1926 Brecht outlines his idea of the document as an artifact or even a fake that would become “authentic” only by provoking conflicting commentaries ... In *Fatzer* Brecht, “favors the idea of a theatre where the spectators would be able to take part in the making of documents, embodying thereby a revolution in the theatrical process itself” (Wilke 1999: 122). Brecht had worked in Piscator’s theatre, which incorporated film and photographs as historic events into the performances, and he then developed a contrasting aesthetic, whereby the document, “would become ‘authentic’ only by provoking conflicting interpretations (Wilke 199: 123). Brecht is here developing a dialectical approach to knowledge, as he was in the *Street Scene*, where what we see, or know, is not the same as somebody else who has seen the same incident. This form is how *Songs to the Judges* is written, in juxtaposing conflicting interpretations of history scene by scene, two conflicting interpretations of history, between Māori and Pākehā are revealed.

Postmodern – Pastiche

Songs to the Judges is pieced together from gathered fragments, a retrovision of the last 150 years of Aotearoa New Zealand’s history of colonisation at the turn of the new millennium. A collection of moments of fracture and crisis, of Māori and Pākehā stories and representations, a collage of voices, “More than any of my writings I

consider *Judges* to be a community creation, hardly my own at all” (Thompson 1983: Introduction). This denial of authorship is a literal example of Barthes ‘Death of the Author’,

The removal of the Author (one could talk here with Brecht of a veritable ‘distancing’, the Author diminishing like a figurine at the far end of the literary stage) is not merely an historical fact or an act of writing; it utterly transforms the modern text (or – which is the same thing – the text is henceforth made and read in such a way that at all its levels the author is absent). The temporality is different. The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and an *after*. The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child. In complete contrast, the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here and now* (1977: 145).

Songs to the Judges is a counter-narrative of power and discipline/knowledge, stories not often retold, the actors were unaware of them, and the Judge had not heard about Raglan, or Bastion Point: historical forgetting. A montage is created between the official law and protest against it, switching between the two, with the juxtaposition of different bodies in space. The text is intertextual, a mosaic of quotations. In an interview with Howard McNaughton I questioned him about *Songs to the Judges* being postmodern,

Lilicherie: I have thought of it as being postmodern in its performance style in that it breaks with realist narrative structure; in that it doesn’t have links between the songs; the characters are not unified; and it foregrounds conventions of perception – what are your thoughts on this?

Howard: Well certainly there are lots of elements that are postmodern, like the disjunctive narrative and so on and the instability of characterisation. I would also look at the element of collage in it, the fact that it is a matter of putting together of ready-mades that has obviously been very postmodern method of composition. I also see the tone of it as having elements of postmodern particularly in what you talked about the play in parody and pastiche – a lot of the elements of Gilbert and Sullivan as Mervyn inserted them are a pastiche of dead Victorian junk that seems to be totally irrelevant, but at the same time there are other voices that are working through them, you know claiming a sort of relevance. So with your production and with Mervyn's production you are constantly wondering just how serious is this? How seriously am I to take it? And so for this constant uncertainty about the value loading of the whole thing, which I would talk about as the pastiche factor, I would say it's a very well done postmodern play. That's interesting as I have never actually heard the play referred to as postmodern. I would have thought that postmodernism didn't come into New Zealand theatre, certainly until the late 80s rather than the early 80s (2000).

Classifying *Songs to the Judges* as postmodern throws a new perspective upon it, making Thompson a leader of the postmodern genre in theatre in Aoteara New Zealand. Through the pluralism of voices there is a hope that the marginalised in society will be heard. This idea of pluralism, or intentional hybridity, fed into the script where the text was constructed from stories from both Māori and Pākehā on the same issues, and the songs were then scripted back to back so no one perspective was dominant.

Montage

THE DRAMATURG: As we've seen, the Augsburg¹⁸ cuts his plays up into a series of little independent playlets, so that the action progresses by jumps. He doesn't like scenes to slide imperceptibly into one another. So how does he cut, then, and from what points of view? He does it in such a way that each

¹⁸ Brecht sometimes called himself by this name, as he was from Augsburg.

individual scene can be given a title of a historical or social-political or anthropological kind (Brecht 1965: 75).

Brecht is describing the process of 'montage', the French word for film editing where pieces of film are cut and joined to construct the whole. "Eisenstein's original concept of montage was that meaning in the cinema was not inherent in any filmed object but was created by the collision of two signifying elements, one coming after the other and, through the juxtaposition, defining the sense to be given to the whole" (Nowell-Smith 1991: xiii). Benjamin argues that Brecht, "lets the conditions speak for themselves, so that they confront each other dialectically. Their various elements are played off logically against one another" (1966: 8). For Benjamin the principle of montage contained the possibility to connect dissimilars to shock spectators into new understandings, he saw it as, "the major constitutive principle of the artistic imagination in the age of technology" (Mitchell: 1966 xiii).

Eisenstein argued that, "any two sequences, when juxtaposed, inevitably combine into another concept which arises from that juxtaposition as something qualitatively new" (1991: 296). We draw conclusions about things in relation to each other. He claimed that, "A living work of art draws the spectator into the 'process' of the creation, taking the spectator through the steps of the process to the result" (1991: 296). This was the aim of *Songs to the Judges*, that the conditions dialectically structured should speak for themselves, and that the spectators travelled through time,

through specific juxtapositions of events, in the process of colonisation to decolonisation, where they could draw their own conclusions at the end. This method is remarkable because it is dynamic. The image is not ready made but created from separate elements in the perception of the spectator. Brecht directed his actors to take one thing after another in the creation of their role or character. This is what we see in montage, the placing of one thing after another, to create a new meaning between the relationship of the two things. This involves the spectator as they must follow the same creative process as the actor, and experience the dynamic process of the making of the image. "This is a suitable point at which to recall how Marx defined the process of true research:

Not only the results of research but the route leading to them should be a truthful one. The investigation of the truth must itself be truthful; truthful research is the truth dissected, the separated limbs of which are reunited in the result (Eisenstein 1991: 309).

This definition of research is a definition of the rehearsal process, and validates performance as research, where the rehearsal process is analysed, it is the route to the result of the performance. In rehearsal all is chaos, torn apart, investigated, the truth searched for on all levels, to be piece by piece collated to create the performance.

Search for a National Form

Lukacs advocated that there is a dialectical relationship between form and content, that form is the product of content and reacts back on it, whilst Marx

advocated that form must be the ‘form of its content’ or else it was of no value. Hegel suggested that the content determined the most suitable form for itself, and Trotsky maintained that the need to create a new form was rooted in the social. Form is political. Althusser argued that art allows us to see the ideology from whence it comes, “it literally makes a spectacle of ideology, and in so doing, elucidates, even materially objectifies, the presence and activity of ideology” (Klinger 1986: 75). In searching for a new form for his contents Thompson steps into this political debate,

According to Brecht and Benjamin the radical work of art must oppose the illusionist mode at every level. The means of expression are ideologically determined, it is no longer sufficient to place new contents in the old structures of expression. Instead, the signifying system itself must be attacked, in order to throw the basis upon which the dominant ideological message rests (Walsh 1981: 39).

Thompson was searching for a unique form of New Zealand theatre and looked for it in the songplay and in Māori performance. In this he could be seen as perpetrating a stereotype of Māori, ‘they can all sing and dance’. But it could be argued that he was influenced by the form of Māori ceremony itself with its oral tradition and form, of a speech being followed by a song, mixing speech, song and action, voice and body. In his intermixing of Māori performance forms and Western theatre, Thompson had stumbled upon the genesis of Mārae Theatre¹⁹, but did not recognise this as the form intrinsic to Aotearoa New Zealand, instead championing the songplay,

¹⁹ See chapter on Environmental Theatre for a description of Mārae Theatre.

In particular, I will continue to advance the cause of that brand of theatre I call the songplay, which, I am convinced, has the potential to be New Zealand's most unique contribution to drama. Let music be raised in our land. And in that, as in other spheres, let us open our hearts and our ears to the distinctive genius of the Maori (Thompson 1980: 163).

As is analysed in the chapter on music, the songplay has its roots from a variety of sources, so it is not really a new form. But, Marae Theatre could well be identified as a new form, notwithstanding that Māori have always performed on the marae. Marae Theatre, where the Western form is utilised and juxtaposed to the Māori form, is I believe unique in the world and this has evolved from a change in ideology, where Māori place value on 'theatre' as a tool for social change, and where Pākehā recognise Māori performance as valid representation on the stage.

Nationalism

From the margins of modernity, at the insurmountable extremes of storytelling, we encounter the question of cultural difference as the perplexity of living, and writing, the nation (Bhabha 1990: 311).

Wanting a theatre form to be recognised as being from Aotearoa New Zealand, as a way of being identified through theatre, heralds a nationalist consciousness developing. It was not until the age of exploration that the nation state defined itself as such, where European nationalism grew from foreign conquest. Since WWII it is the colonised who have been actively seeking independence from their imperial masters, and looking to nationalism as the method. The promoting of nationalism bases itself on, the idea of a chosen people, in exile, oppressed. This can be seen in Aotearoa New

Zealand in contemporary society, where some Māori claim descent from Abraham, as being the chosen people like the Israelites, the lost tribe. “Nationalists believe that they ought to rule themselves and shape their own destinies, and they should be in control of the social, economic and political institutions” (Spoonley 1988: 45).

Modern nationalism aims at breaking up existing states, it is a subversive action in the global village, being separatist, a bid to save indigenous culture in a time of late capitalism. Whilst Europeans may have been turned against the idea of nationalism from their experience of fascism, world war and colonialism, the nationalistic mood has been felt since World War II in emergent societies, breakaways from the European continent.

Decolonisation and Nationalism

Fanon argued that, whereas the colonised usually has only a choice between retraction of his being and a frenzied attempt at identification with the colonizer, the [decolonised] has brought into existence a new, positive, efficient personality, whose richness is provided ... by his certainty that he embodies a decisive moment of [cultural] consciousness (Darder 1995a: 6).

For the colonised, nationalism is one of the steps back to reclaiming what was taken away, the culture. As seen on Aotearoa New Zealand what has been labelled the Māori renaissance²⁰ has entailed Māori reclaiming their language, which has meant the separation of Māori children into schools that teach only in te reo Māori and a reclamation of culturally specific skills throughout the culture. This is a striving for

²⁰ A very European title in its own right, implying mimicry.

tinorangatiratanga, or self determination and this separatism has extended to theatre.

Māori playwrights, for example, Briar Grace Smith and Hone Kouka, are writing plays for Māori actors about Māori themes. It can be argued that before a people can contribute on an equal footing in a bicultural culture, they must first establish their own culture. Nationalism is one step of this journey, maybe it will lead towards an opening out towards Pākehā in joint ventures, maybe it will not. Aotearoa New Zealand is currently enmeshed in the process of Māori engaging with nationalism. In a global village, this is an exciting dynamic - how the indigenous people negotiate between the boundaries of a closed culture, by Māori for Māori, to international trade and tourism.

This fast cultural development is what Césaire calls decolonisation. Theatre can assist this development, the process of rehearsal itself is a creative exploration of difference. Theatre as a tool of decolonisation must be comprehensible by the people, many of whom have never been to theatre before. This was one of the agendas of Thompson in his bid for a popular theatre form,

'Popular' means intelligible to the broad masses ... *Realist* means: laying bare society's causal network / showing up the dominant viewpoint as the viewpoint of the dominators / writing from the standpoint of the class which has prepared the broadest solutions for the most pressing problems afflicting human society / emphasizing the dynamics of development / concrete and so as to encourage abstraction (Brecht 1964: 108-9).

Songs to the Judges: resistance theatre

Yet it was the case nearly everywhere in the non-European world that the coming of the white man brought forth some sort of resistance. What I left out

of *Orientalism* was that response to Western dominance which culminated in the great movement of decolonisation all across the Third World. Along with armed resistance ... there also went considerable efforts in cultural resistance almost everywhere, the assertions of nationalist identities, and, in the political realm, the creation of associations and parties whose common goal was self-determination and national independence (Said 1994: xii).

Gary Boire has written of Thompson's *Songs to the Judges* as anti-colonial resistance literature, where the representation of imperialist law is a feature, "how the law *as text* undergoes a ferocious interrogation during the act of anti-colonial representation" (Boire 191: 15). He argues for Thompson's play being an anti-colonial paradigm of contemporary resistance literature, because, "within the multiple folds of this deceptively simple songplay are played out a number of crucial methods by which many contemporary writers resurrect, and thereby resist, Eurocentric texts" (1991: 15). Anti-colonialists tend to use irony or subversive techniques, rather than copy the forms of their colonial predecessors as acts of reclamation. Thompson used Gilbert and Sullivan to satirize, or turn the world upside down and in so doing laughed at the form itself. These playful turns, as in the music hall tradition, are "a strategy that seeks to expose the tensions and/or contradictions inherent in both any given official 'text'" (Boire 1991: 15). Said argues that what is important in the European writer is, "the political willingness to take seriously the alternatives to imperialism, among them the existence of other cultures and societies" (Said 1994: xxii). Whilst Thompson as a non-Māori has been critiqued for writing about Māori issues, he does have what Said

says is important in the European writer in that he takes seriously the existence of another culture in Aotearoa New Zealand, “The task then is to describe [imperialism] as pertaining to Indians *and* Britishers, Algerians *and* French, Westerners *and* Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, and Australians despite the horrors, the bloodshed, and the vengeful bitterness” (Said 1994: xxiv). In *Songs to the Judges* both the form and the content describe imperialism as pertaining to Britishers *and* Māori, in a dialectic, song by song, Māori, British, Māori, British ...

Dialectic

In the ‘Short Organum for the Theatre’ Brecht states,

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This technique allows the theatre to make use in its representations of the new social scientific method known as dialectical materialism. In order to unearth society’s laws of motion this method treats social situations as processes, and traces out all their inconsistencies. It regards nothing as existing except in so far as it changes, in other words is in disharmony with itself (1964: 193).

Is *Songs to the Judges* a dialectic? Is it a true representation from both sides?

The content does present different perspectives, but as spectators read it from the present it appears that the British or Pākehā are always painted in a bad light.

However, if one were the European character in 1890, one would not necessarily feel one was acting in a ‘bad’ way, as one of the actors asked me “Do we have to play the baddies all the time?” Perceptions of political correctness have changed, what from today’s perspective may seem untenable, in the social context of the 1890s was

‘correct’. For instance, the title of the song ‘We Think You Ought to Die’ was taken directly from a newspaper headline, where the ideology of the day, because of the drastic drop in the Māori population²¹ believed that Māori would die out. Formally, the songs are arranged in a dialectical relationship. In almost all cases there is one from a Māori and then a Pākehā perspective, so the structure gives voice to both cultures from two different points of view. In a contemporary reading, perhaps the dialectic more readily reflects that of Grotowski, of apotheosis and derision, in exalting Māori culture and deriding European?

Another name for resistance theatre is postcolonial theatre or performance, which Gilbert and Tompkins define as including:

acts that respond to the experience of imperialism ...
 acts performed for the continuation and/or regeneration of the colonised ...
 acts performed with the awareness of, and sometimes the incorporation of, post-contact forms; and acts that interrogate the hegemony that underlies imperial representation (1996: 11).

Utilising Gilbert and Tompkins definition above, I argue that Thompson’s *Songs to the Judges* is a postcolonial and resistance text, because the play is a response to the experience of imperialism; it incorporates post-contact and pre-contact forms; it can be performed for a regeneration of ideas for both Māori and Pākehā as a protest against inequality in the justice system; and in this protest exposes the hegemonic structures and beliefs underlying imperial representation in Aotearoa New Zealand; it

²¹ Mainly due to diseases brought by the British to which Māori had no immunity.

refuses closure, the final song for a moment imaging a utopian harmony between the races, but then separating them with an uneasy distance, “Often, post-colonial literatures refuse closure to stress the provisionality of post-colonial identities, reinforcing Helen Tiffin’s comment that ‘Decolonization is process, not arrival’ (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996: 11).

Songs to the Judges maps transgressions where the land, body and subjectivity intersect in points of antagonism. For Foucault transgression is the interrogation of boundaries, and I suggest that bicultural theatre by this very definition is therefore transgressive. Anti-colonial resistance is a theme of *Songs to the Judges*, “*Coming to know the past* has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges ... Telling our stories from the past, reclaiming the past, giving testimony to the injustices of the past are all strategies which are commonly employed by indigenous peoples struggling for justice ... And yet, the need to tell our stories remains the powerful imperative of a powerful form of resistance” (Smith 1999: 34-5). The re-telling of history was important to Thompson, to question how history is read, and the use of history as a vehicle for decolonising consciousness.

Marginalised

Thompson writes his historical reference points in the margins, his construction methodology is visible, the margins contain a track for others to navigate. In *Songs to*

the Judges it is not only the performance aspect of the songplay that is innovative, the printed word on the page has a political edge as well, set out in columns, the right hand side comments on the text on the left side of the page. There is a conversation happening on the page between the two, one reflecting on the other, a little like the Brechtian actor, who is able to stand outside their character and pass comment on it. A doubleness.

In *Songs to the Judges* Thompson states,

Musically and dramatically there is much more to *Judges* than its politics. I make no apology for those politics or for the direction they take – the play enshrines one of the most urgent functions of theatre. Nevertheless I commend readers and listeners to the margins of the piece; they may find more complexity there than they suspect (1984: 149).

JUDGE. On April the 2nd 1916

We arrested the prophet Rua
And charged him with sedition
- and with having one son
fewer;

*One of Rua's sons was
shot dead during the
skirmish*

(1984: 160).

Complexity in the margins. Marginalised. Put on the side. Thompson's margin comments, while explaining the text, also raise questions and act in a didactic manner, leading the reader through a maze of pathways to read the histories themselves. This form of writing is seen in the *Brecht Commentary* where Benjamin claims that the words have their pedagogical effect first, their political effect second and their poetic effect last of all. The purpose of the commentary ... is to advance the pedagogical effect as much as possible and to retard the poetic one ...

One who is beaten does not

Escape

Wisdom.

Hold on tight and sink! Be afraid!

Go on, sink!

‘Go on, sink!’: Fatzer must find a

Foothold in his hopelessness

(Benjamin 1966: 30).

Was Thompson influenced in the form of his writing of the songplays by Brecht? Benjamin says of the commentary that it is “a very dialectical state of affairs which enlists this archaic form, the commentary – which, after all, is an authoritative form” (1966: 43).

In the commentary Brecht does not supplement the document but causes an “interruption and discontinuity of meaning” (Wilke, 1999: 122). “Especially in the *Fatzer* fragment Brecht outlines a dialectical concept of document and commentary: [The *Fatzer* commentary belongs to the *Fatzer* document. The *Fatzer* commentary contains two sorts of instructions for the actors: those concerning representation and those concerning the meaning and application of the document.] Wilkie 199: 122.

Balme maintains that a feature of syncretic theatrical texts is that they have ‘extensive didascalic material’, “This textual material goes beyond descriptive stage directions. It encompasses glossaries and forewords, as well as short commentaries on ethnographically relevant material, and thus takes cognizance – at least for the reader – of the problem of cultural strangeness that by definition marks these theatrical texts” (Balme 1999: 7). This additional didascalic material is a feature of *Songs to the*

Judges and Thompson comments in the Introduction, that whilst the text may look simplistic on the page, it is in fact dense and complex. In my research for directing the play I followed the marginalised material, following his track in researching and writing the playscript, meeting many of the people, kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face).

Thompson's Production 1980 - Context

Thompson's *Songs to the Judges* was written in a narrative space between Bruce Mason and the first of the new Māori playwrights²², a liminal space, where he attempted to place minority stories on the stage. The original cast consisted of: Margaret Blay, Sharon da Silva, Arthur Ranford, Hemi Rapata and Mervyn Thompson. By 1980 the Māori renaissance was well under way, with a resurgence in political protests over land,

Protests over the Treaty of Waitangi, Bastion Point, land marches, tent embassies, sit-ins and petitions were the key events for Maori [in the 1960s and 1970s] ... It is at this point that the questions asked by critical theory were also being asked by people on the ground. These people were indigenous activists rather than Marxists, but were asking similar sorts of questions about the connections between power and research²³ (Smith 1999: 165).

1980 was five years after the Land March; the passing of the Parliamentary Treaty of Waitangi Act; and the foundation of The World Council of Indigenous Peoples; and just before the 1981 Springbok Rugby Tour; and the opening of the Depot Theatre in 1983. This first production of *Songs to the Judges* was set in the centre of

²² Riwia Brown, John Broughton, Hone Kouka, Apirana Taylor, among others.

²³ In reference to the student riots in Paris in 1968.

massive upheavals in the public and private relationships between the Māori and Pākehā peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand. Brian Potiki²⁴ attended a performance and wrote to me of his memories,

as i said, i saw this [*Songs to the Judges*] performed in Auckland (with richard Eriwata still in the cast). at the same time we were performing/touring our play 'Maranga Mai'. i met Mervyn twice. once in 1980 when he visited my then-partner roma potiki and ripeka Evans (her flatmate). Again in 1987 in chch – he was performing 'coaltown blues' to the academy performing arts course. (i brought my own students from the polytech performing arts course). he was, like bruce mason, original and masterful. like a navigator of old ... the auckland production was controversial because some of the pakeha women actors used 'brown face' makeup to portray maori women (1997).

In the Auckland production Margaret Blay played the role of a Māori character in 'brown face' because Thompson argued he could not find Māori actors. A white woman speaking for Māori. Roma Potiki argued back that, he made no attempt to search for Māori actors. Whilst speaking with Roma in 1997 about *Songs to the Judges*, she remembered that one night after she had been to see Thompson's play, she took him to task in her kitchen for having a Pākehā woman in brown face playing the role of a Māori male.

Brian and Roma Potiki performed in *Maranga Mai*, which played in Auckland at the same time as Thompson's *Songs to the Judges*. The two pieces had similar themes, but *Maranga Mai* was focused on the five years of political protest from 1975 to the Waitangi Day protests of 1980. It was Agitprop Theatre with minimal set and little

²⁴ Member of the theatre group *Maranga Mai*.

sophistication but with a strong political message. The performance mixed Māori performance forms with a Western influence of physical theatre,

the play was an open challenge to the ideology of ‘one people’ and a contradiction of the myth of New Zealand society as a racial utopia, there was an immediate overreaction by authorities ... Merv Wellington, the Minister of Education, was reputedly so angered by reports about the play that he asked the Manukau City Council to ban the *Mauranga Mai* theatrical review group from all schools in its area ... The overreaction of the critics was to the power of drama, however amateurishly presented, to raise the level of political consciousness over Maori grievances, as much as to the content of the play (Walker 1990: 226).

In an interview with Hone Kouka, Howard McNaughton asked,

HOWARD: So you’d agree with Roma Potiki that the Land March was a decisive thing? And *Maranga Mai*?

HONE: Yes. From what I’ve seen, *Maranga Mai* didn’t dwell on artistic merit, its emphasis was to tell the story, to get the message across (Gilbert 1999: 109).

In 1981 the Springbok tour divided the country down the middle, there was no middle ground, the binaries were palpable. Division between women and men; families separated; division between Māori and Pākehā; Māori militants. The 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand were a time of civil war, and the division between the rich and poor grew larger, ‘While everyone else was engaged in hostilities across the barricades of race and gender – and in rending their opponents limb from limb – the new technocrats went on quietly destroying the lives and the hopes of entire generations of New Zealanders’ (Thompson 1991: 68).

In 1981, with funding from the Student Arts Council, Thompson took *Songs to the Judges* on a tour of Aotearoa New Zealand. As recorded in *Act* Thompson says of the tour, “By any standards this was a great tour. We played to large and sometimes overflow houses, we received ten standing ovations, and the reviews were overwhelming” (1981: 47). He adds that the lasting value of the tour was in ‘the meetings with Maori people, the exchanges of ideas and aroha, the impromptu ceremonials, and the presiding, guiding genius of Hemi Rapata’.

After the performance at the Wellington Teachers’ College Kere Kaa and five other Maori people came down to our dressing room. A simple informal ceremony is held, with speeches in Maori and English. Kere and the others express their feelings about the show. Just yesterday, they say, the campus experienced a very ugly racist incident; *Judges* has helped to heal the wound. The speeches and the waiata which ends the meeting move us all to tears and beyond. For those few moments that room becomes a sacred place (Thompson 1981: 47).

Bruce Mason reviewed the Wellington Teachers’ College performance in the *Evening Post* saying,

The huge audience inflated ‘Songs to the Judges’ to a prophetic and incantory power ... simply by being there, by acting in creative complicity with the performers, they achieved this enlargement of vision and scale. An audience is not an inert passively recording mass but a living, plastic entity as important as the players themselves (1981: 47).

It was after this performance that Thompson realised what he thought was a performance best performed for an intimate theatre, received the best reception before a large audience in a large auditorium. It was when they played in small spaces that the audience did not rise to its feet.

In December 2000 I interviewed David Carnegie²⁵, who had edited the script for *Songs to the Judges* and attended a performance in Wellington, about the use of the stage and audience composition,

David: My main contact with the play is twofold: one is I saw the original production when it came to Wellington and the other is that I edited the script. So far as I recall, the stage directions in the script pretty much reflect what actually happened in that first production. The stage directions are a very good guide to how it was actually done.

Lilicherie: And it was done on a thrust stage, or it was on a proscenium, or did it change with the location they were performing in?

David: Maybe, where did they do it here? My recollection is that it wasn't in a conventional proscenium arch theatre here, I don't think it was at Memorial Theatre or anywhere like that. I might be able to find where it was done here. I probably have the review of it. *Songs to the Judges*, this is *Salient* the student newspaper review, 'stylistically the acting was inconsistent', that would be right, 'toured by the Student Arts Association', who did quite a lot of touring at that time. My recollection was that it was done in a hall ... that it was essentially a non-theatrical space. I seem to recall that we were sitting on chairs on the floor ... Certainly it was a very informal and relatively undefined acting space. The space was simply defined by where the front row of the chairs was. Yes, it may well have been in fact a thrust, certainly the Judge's rostrum was up at the back. You had this sort of pattern of the chorus moving forward towards the audience and moving back again.

Lilicherie: Do you have a recollection of how the audience was comprised, was it a mix of Māori and Pākehā?

David: I don't have a strong recollection of that – no. I am trying to think what would have struck me. I think it would have struck me had there been no Māori in the audience. What was the date. 81 yes, April 81, yes, its before the Tour. Although the Tour was already in the air and we may have already been having street demonstrations by then. So yes, race was certainly an issue. But this was before *Te Ao Whakaari* and *The Depot Taki Rua* and so on really got going, so there wasn't as big a Māori audience for theatre as there became subsequently.

²⁵ David Carnegie, A/Professor/Reader, Programme Director – Theatre, School of English, Film and Theatre, Victoria University of Wellington.

Lilicherie: Roma Potiki's comments were that in 1980 in Auckland the atmosphere was quite politically charged – there were a lot of Māori activists and quite a bit of anger and tension in the air around the play. I am interested in how that transposed through different centres.

David: I certainly remember my own sense, it was something I was fairly alert to and interested in and I remember the strength of the Māori performers there and I remember speculating in my own mind about Mervyn Thompson's role within that, and the fact that Proc²⁶ was casting himself always as the bumbling, incompetent, over bearing, vicious, Pākehā authority. He was the caricature of every aspect of Pākehā oppression of Māori that the play deals with and he engaged with that with the pomposity and with the viciousness and with the blindness, the stupidity, (whichever aspect it was) he engaged with that with vigour and enjoyment always caricaturing it and in a sense very Brechtian performance. One always knew that there was a passionate, liberal, underneath, acting, acting, always these appalling, either benignly patronising ... but one could see the liberal actor and the anger of the acting, whereas the anger there was transmuted through its opposite. The liberal anger at what had happened was transmuted through the very forces that he didn't like as an acting process, whereas the Māori anger from the Māori performers was simply to act, it was as if there was a conflation of them as actor and of them as character whereas with Mervyn Thompson you had a kind of diametrical reflection of – diametrically opposite reflection of which was quite quite different.

Lilicherie: And that's a question that has been raised as I am looking at the writing – when our kaumatua came in to work with the Māori actors and the first thing he said to them was, 'what are you doing, you are representing your tūpuna here. They are behind you, they are on your shoulders'. If the Māori actors were representing their ancestors, how much were they representing their character? If they are only on stage representing Māori what then is their role in acting?

David: Yes, where does the representation come of the virtual character? Good drama is a virtual act, not a real act. Or it's a virtual act produced by a real act.

From another perspective Howard McNaughton spoke to me about the 1981

performance of *Songs to the Judges* in Christchurch,

²⁶ Thompson's nickname given to him by his friends.

Lilicherie: I just wonder what you remember, where it was, if it was on the proscenium stage? And if there was audience interaction or response?

Howard: It was done in the Southern Ballet which was much as it is now although I don't remember the proscenium being used – it was at least partially thrust stage, so it seemed to be out in the audience. By the time that it appeared here [Christchurch] of course it already had the Auckland season and at least a partial North Island tour behind it. And the sense that I had was that the initial nervousness, that not only Mervyn but probably the entire cast had, had dissolved a bit and they were beginning to develop a momentum – they had got some very good Auckland reviews and they were sensing that they had something very exciting on their hands. So the feeling I had was that it was being delivered almost with audacity. Certainly it was a very confident, assertive, in your face, kind of a production. Here of course it was also the fact that Mervyn was bringing a cast which was entirely an Auckland cast still at that point back to his home town, so there was almost an element of swagger attached to it. That Mervyn was confident of this particular location.

Lilicherie: Did he have a full contingent of Māori actors, or did he have Margaret Blay playing a Māori?

Howard: Yes, I only read about that later. I certainly was not aware of it here. I actually looked for the programme but couldn't find it. He lost Don Selwyn at the very last minute.

Lilicherie: I am going to Auckland in December and I am going to try and interview Don when I get there. Do you know more about why Don left?

Howard: I probably do know more, whether or not it would be ... I am not sure, but Mervyn and Don had actually worked together much earlier in *Awatea*, which I think was in 74, and I was involved in that quite a bit too, and at that point there was a very strong suggestion of – Don obviously had a great deal of respect for Mervyn as a director, he also I think quite liked the play. At that point *Awatea* was attracting a certain amount of negative commentaries – Don seemed to have no trouble with the play, but I think he was in the position then, that Roma Potiki articulated quite strongly in the 80s, that he had developed a case of the Pākehā intellectual who was doing cultural poaching, you know the way she accused *Amamus Theatre of the Eighth Day* as doing. For that reason I think Don was a bit ambivalent about his involvement. At that point he was very aware of the role he was playing ... Like, would Mervyn have thought of using a cultural advisor at that point?

The New Zealand Students Arts Council 'Touring Papers' noted that,

'Judges' has been described by one reviewer as 'a provocative, gripping theatrical experience of the kind too rare in New Zealand's theatre.' Not surprisingly, Thompson's project was not greeted with enthusiasm from all sides. When word got around that a pakeha playwright was preparing a Maori play, there were murmured threats of boycotts and pickets by Maori radicals. One Maori actor dropped out of the production close to opening night, partly because of such pressure. While Thompson found favour with most Maoris once they'd seen his play, he blames over-conscientious pakehas for much of the angsting, "There's a great deal of irony in the show. I wrote it, say, 90 percent sympathetic to the Maori but there's that 10 percent margin of irony that some Europeans have misinterpreted. They feel they must worry on the Maoris' behalf. I think the Maoris are quite able to worry on their own" (Thompson: 1981).

Another point of contention was Thompson's finale, a song quoting the Maori prophets' belief that there would finally be a meeting of the two races and building of a truly bicultural society. "Some European radicals thought I should be advocating violence as the real ending. These people seem particularly fond of urging others on from the sidelines, but never getting hurt themselves. They also forget that while the final song is of unity the last image is of the two races moving apart, to opposite sides of the stage." However, Thompson was confident that many Māori had a different perspective,

It is interesting that Maori people present at that show [The city Art Gallery, Wellington] had no difficulty in understanding that the hopes expressed in the lyrics of the last song ('On That Day'), are deliberately and precisely undercut by the image of separation that follows. Two races staring at each other uneasily across space: that is where the play ends. It is amazing how much difficulty literal thinkers, particularly those in the Marxist mould, have in penetrating this song and the images it employs. They seem to get stuck on Te

Whiti and the Old Testament and in their rage not to realise that both are used metaphorically. (As an atheist I would not and could not use religious imagery in any other way!) The vision that the last song presents moves across history and becomes a vision for the present day (Thompson 1981: 48).

Thompson was part of his generation, his time, in the colonial history of Aotearoa New Zealand. Did he, or to what extent was he able to, transcend his socialisation?

I do not believe that authors are mechanically determined by ideology, class, or economic history, but authors are, I also believe, very much in the history of their societies, shaping and shaped by that history and their social experience in different measure. Culture and the aesthetic forms it contains derive from historical experience (Said 1994: xxiv).

Thompson did not hold the view that there was no other life, history or culture than the European (dominant) worth representing and had a willingness to represent Māori culture and resist imperialism. But at the same time, he did not cross over to the other side going 'native' like Jean Genet or the missionary Kendell²⁷. Thompson writes in the notes for *'It's Coming'* that, "It is based on words once spoken to me by Maori actor Don Selwyn". Where did he stand? It is easy to say the words, but more difficult to 'walk the talk'. There is no such thing as remaining neutral. Was this the reason Selwyn left the show late in rehearsals? In my interviews with Selwyn and McNaughton neither revealed the crux of the problem of why Selwyn left *Songs to the*

²⁷ Early missionary to Aotearoa New Zealand, who married a Māori woman and lived a Māori lifestyle, an act deeply frowned upon by the church and the European community of the time.

Judges and I can only presume that was out of respect for Thompson. In an interview with Selwyn I asked him about his relationship with Mervyn Thompson,

Don: I was involved with Mervyn over quite a long period really, which began with *Awatea* in the Court Theatre, as a matter of fact it started before then. I think that, goodness me ... *Songs to the Judges* was being done at the Maidment, it was a long time ago. Yeah, I always felt he was quite a dynamic influence on New Zealand theatre and he had quite a strong empathy for local productions and indigenous theatre, as he termed it, and so anything that involved Māori perspectives he was right behind it and that was definitely the case when he was at Downstage – there was also a couple of other productions he did at Downstage.

Lilicherie: I wonder if he had a cultural advisor on *Songs to the Judges*?

Don: My relationship with him was of course purely and simply theatrical. But where the cultural aspects came into it we just automatically proceeded taking into account all those sort of things, because I think that he was very much aware of the need for the integrity of the culture and input being put in the right place. And as I said I had more to do with that with Bruce Mason's *Awatea* when he directed in Christchurch I played the lead with Pat ... I think he set out very strongly to try and get all those things in perspective and from that point of view I really enjoyed working for him. I found him quite volatile as an individual. He had a tremendous passion being a West Coastie – all those sorts of things were a terrific driving force for him. He worked, he didn't spare the rod, in the sense to be able to get as much depth in the characterisations was the most important thing. I think his enthusiasm in that was a little bit difficult for some people to cope with, but I understood him and the thing I admired, was we were able to be quite frank. Our relationship was based on the fact that what we were aiming for was actually far more important than our own little idiosyncrasies. And I always felt that about him in terms of his work. And I thought that *Songs to the Judges* was very political, all his work had a real political statement to make, and I think that in a way we have lost that in theatre. We have lost that aspect, that appealed to me because I thought that even in Māori terms we had a lot of political statements to make in theatre. And I think that with the Māori writers, people like Habib, people like Selwyn Wiru that their aim was to make those political statements as well. So it was in a way quite easy for me to make transition into working under someone like Proc because he had that same sort of political drive. I think that people who were new to theatre they would find it difficult because I think he was such a task master, whereas all of us who were hardened, seasoned theatrical people; knew that he was driving at obvious

philosophical reasons. Rather than personal. Yeah, I think that he always pushed the boundaries, so therefore I think that he challenged administration, he challenged ... I got to know him very well, off the stage, about philosophical things.

Lilicherie: In the end you were not performing in Songs to the Judges?

Don: There were two things about *Songs to the Judges*, one was that there was in being able to – we had a conflict about the cultural elements in it. And I was responsible for getting a whole lot of people together, Māori's in particular, to work on it, and then I felt that my presence, because I, he found it difficult to actually come to terms with my cultural concept, that I preferred to let him handle the production because otherwise I – it wasn't a personal thing, it happened to be an editorial position. That's why I didn't perform (McGregor: 2002).

When it comes,
When it comes,
What will you hold in your hand?

Gun or taiaha,
Or taiaha or gun,
What will you hold in your hand?

...
And the question
They are asking
As you pass them
In the night:
When the time comes
Where will he be
On my left or
On my right?

This song poses the central question of the play, but the play does not end on this note, Michael Neil critiques the play because of its, tendency to back away from the grimness of one conclusion: ... *When the time comes, Where will he be, On my left,*

Or on my right, and take refuge in the willed optimism of another: ... And the nations shall know, Aroha, And from Aotearoa, The clouds shall roll away

Thompson and Dart are equally guilty here: the song builds on a prophesy of Te Whiti but dissipates in humodic sentimentality. 'Aroha', one Maori told Thompson after the performance, 'includes giving a man a feed before you shoot him.' That remark indicates exactly the difficult moral and emotional territory in which Thompson and his actors move for most of their performance ... Thompson has justified his ending as a refusal to gloat over the negative prospect of violence. I do not think his text ever does that; nor does it need the cosmetic of artificial positives (Neill: 1979).

XVI

A historical materialist cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time stands still and has come to a stop. For this notion defines the present in which he himself is writing history. Historicism gives the 'eternal' image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past. The historical materialist leaves it to others to be drained by the whore called 'once upon a time' in historicism's bordello. He remains in control of his powers, man enough to blast open the continuum of history (Benjamin 1992: 254).

As an historical materialist Thompson was very aware of his own, and all of our creation of history in our own lives. He believed in documenting and keeping records of his work and life. His plays deal with historical themes, but not with the victors of history, nor with the dominant historical records, but with the undocumented, the forgotten, the unwritten, the unacknowledged, the losers of the battles (political or actual), in a bid to reclaim the lost voices of the past, through the present. *Songs to the Judges* is an intervention in the historical process, "This dialectical approach enables us to view ideological struggle and social change as possible, for through it we may

examine and understand the tensions and contradictions within both ideology and society” (Newton and Rosenfelt: xxiii). In a letter to Madeline McNamara during the season on *Songs to the Judges* Thompson wrote,

Yes, yes, yes, art and politics must mix, theatre and politics are inseparable and no narrowing of viewpoint is necessary when they do. My current show, *Songs to the Judges*, is proving that point – and causing a great deal of animated discussion in both the theatre and the political world (1981).

McGregor’s Production 1998 – Context

This contextualisation is from a personal perspective, for a full historical context, see chapter on The Treaty of Waitangi, where the Treaty and the history of bicultural theatre is contextualised.

In 1994 I saw *Nga Tangata Toa*, by Hone Kouka, at Taki Rua Theatre, which was my first experience of a professional bicultural production. As I sat digging my bare feet into the black sand of the set what I saw unfold before me was the story of Siegfried and Kriemhild from of the *Nibelungenlied*, the German national myth. Not having read the programme I had not seen the acknowledgement to Ibsen’s *The Vikings of Helgeland*. In a later meeting it became clear that Kouka was unaware of the Germanic connection with the myth. This was an issue debated when he gave a guest lecture for theatre students at The University of Canterbury and Peter Falkenberg²⁸ (German) brought up the issue of the ownership of myths, or stories,

²⁸ Lecturer, Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Canterbury.

saying that he could not just ‘take’ a Māori myth and present it as a performance, but that a Māori had taken the German myth, unacknowledged, and rewritten it as Māori.

Was this a subversive ‘reclaiming’ by Māori? A taking back of the canon of imperialism as has been done with *The Merchant of Venice* and Heiner Müller’s *Der Auftrag*²⁹? Kouka did not acknowledge it as such, but it could well have been.

Also in 1994, the film *Once Were Warriors* was released, featuring life in a Māori family. Written by Alan Duff, screenplay by Riwia Brown, the content is often violent, and whilst Pākehā could be heard commenting that these things didn’t happen in Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori could be seen in tears in the theatres, saying ‘that’s us’. This was a representation of Māori by Māori on the screen.

In 1997 I attended a *Magdalena Aotearoa* meeting that Roma Potiki was chairing. Afterwards I approached her for advice on how to find the Māori actors for *Songs to the Judges*. She queried why I would want to direct this play in contemporary society and could not see how it would be useful, saying that it was a play ‘of its time’. However, she came to see my production at *Toi Whakaari: The New Zealand Drama School* and after the performance spoke in response to a student who said that, ‘that was all yesterday, in the past, and it is different today’. Roma stood to respond

²⁹ Mudrooroo, *The Aboriginal Demonstrators Confront the Declaration of the Australian Republic on 26th January 2001 with the Production of Der Auftrag by Heiner Müller*. The Aboriginal Actors Company and The Centre for Performance Studies, University of Sydney, with the assistance of The Goethe Institute Sydney and The Eora Centre. Redfern.

passionately, “no it is not different today, it is still going on and we are still fighting”. She spoke of the relevance of the performance for both Māori and Pākehā in 1998.

After the 1998 performance in Hamilton, I was approached by a judge who asked if we would perform the play at the National Conference of Judges later in the year as he believed there was much for judges to learn from the play. Unfortunately, as the cast was comprised predominantly of students with other commitments, this generous offer (with travel funds included) could not be accepted, but corroborates Thompson’s reasons for writing the script.

In March 1999 there was a hikoi (journey) of 300 people from Taranaki to the South Island, who carried stones which they placed on the graves of 180 Māori prisoners who had died and were buried un-marked away from their homes 100 years before. These nameless graves are part of the story of *Songs to the Judges*.

In October 2000 an exhibition on Parihaka was mounted at the City Gallery in Wellington by Roma Potiki. At the opening students from *Toi Whakaari* gave a reading from *Te Raukura* and sang songs from *Songs to the Judges* with introductions to the performances from actors, writers and composers who had been involved in the creation or performance of the first performances.

The positive responses to the 1998 performance of *Songs to the Judges* of being asked to perform in other locations, supports my belief that the production was equally relevant in 1998 as it had been in 1980. Also supporting this claim is the subsequent

interest in Parihaka in the Wellington City Gallery exhibition, which made a national tour, and the book that accompanies the exhibition mentions the 1998 production of *Songs to the Judges*.

The politics of representation changed between 1960 and 2000. In the 60s there was an acceptance of black face minstrelsy, where a white actor blacked his face and played a Māori, but by 1980 it was no longer politically correct to cast a white playing a black. This was still the case in 1998 when I was directing *Songs to the Judges*. However, when talking with Roma Potiki in 2000 she spoke of the possibility of Pākehā playing Māori roles, but in plays written and directed by Māori. These politics of representation relate to the theatrical conventions of the time and place and in what context the play is being performed. As Balme argues,

Receptive codes will determine how syncretized cultural texts are understood, whether as theatre or as folklore. This means that the performability of syncretic theatre is not a question of aesthetics alone. It concerns directly the complex of cultural prejudices and categories of alterity that govern the reception of theatre in any cross-cultural situation (Balme 1999: 275).

One of the issues the 1998 production confronted was the urbanisation of Māori, who have been dispossessed not only of land, but of language and traditional culture. An aim for the performance was to juxtapose different forms of performance (for example, European music hall to Māori taiaha and poi) in a method experimenting with Barba's intercultural theatre, where different forms are juxtaposed on stage. But the Māori actors who chose to be in the play had not necessarily all learnt taiaha or poi!

What to do? Were they to be represented the same as the Pākehā actors, in a style with no codified form? Was I to abandon the project? We confronted the issue that this situation is endemic in Aotearoa New Zealand society and the Māori actors learnt the codified forms they needed for the performance and through this gained an interest in continuing practising Māori performing arts.

The 1998 production was as much about contemporary issues in the 90s as it was about the past³⁰. I worked with an historical materialist agenda, viewing the past through the present, incorporating in the movement scores of the actors, stories from contemporary history, in what I call historical montage. *The Theatre du Soleil* “attempts to intervene in history: to recreate the past, to write and tell history anew” (Schechter 1985: 108). In their production *1789*, based on the French Revolution, they made indirect commentary on the events of May 1968. My production of *Songs to the Judges* was making indirect comment on the events around the fiscal envelope and contemporary Māori protest.

Still, the notion that a public performer can possess history, can know that it belongs to him by virtue of recreating it, suggests that history is not owned or controlled exclusively by those who own publishing companies or estates, or rule nations. History is accessible even to lowly strolling actors and their *1789* audience (Schechter 1985: 110-11).

³⁰ See Chapter, *Semiotic Reading of Songs to the Judges*, for an analysis of this statement.

Comparison between Thompson's and McGregor's Productions of
Songs to the Judges

In an interview with McNaughton I asked him if he had any comparisons he would like to make between the 1980 and 1998 productions,

Howard: I would have thought of Mervyn's original one as being a very stylised regulated production typical of a lot of his productions, right back as far as *First Return* where you have a sense of rigid orchestration ... it would pain him to hear the comparison but your production of it (in Mervyn's production the director was always there) I would suggest that one reason why his production of *Judges* seemed very contemporary and very avant-garde at the time was that compared with a production like *Awatea* it seemed a sort of a huge advance in innovative theatrical style.

In terms of your earlier question about whether theatre can be truly bicultural, which is what you were asking, and if it can happen I would have imagined that in terms of the structural ... with this kind of ... of authority in rehearsal I would imagine that it was what was quite normal for *Taki Rua* – I think *Taki Rua* at that period there was always a kaumatua present at productions ... so the idea of authority being not vested in the individual but ..

Lilicherie: I see the 1998 production as being resistance performance where a voice is heard from the silenced minority or the marginalised as a socially and politically engaged performance which sets out to raise the consciousness of the spectator. Would you think that the production that I did managed to do that ?

Howard: Oh very obviously it would have managed to do that, it would just be a question of degree. I think it was very effective indeed as resistance performance. I suppose it varied quite substantially from one venue to another. In Christchurch playing to an audience that I guess was largely friends, relatives and flatmates of the cast, in other words people ...

Lilicherie: A large number of Māori people came, who weren't necessarily related but certainly you could tell whether the audience was Pākehā or Māori predominantly because Māori laughed at a lot of the jokes.

Howard: From that point of view, the word resistance is too slightly, too simplistic a word to use for effective bicultural theatre. Because the resistance works for one audience pocket and not for others. In other words, the issue of access is fairly constantly a variable in theatre – and there are going to be elements that are claiming a quite specialised awareness. It was really accentuated in Waikato at Hamilton with the Australasian Drama Studies audience. A lot of Australians obviously didn't have much of a clue. I suppose I have to say that *Judges* wasn't effective as resistance performance in the way that *Maranga Mai* so obviously was in that there was a very clear sort of support and line of confrontation in *Maranga Mai*. The complexity of *Judges*, your production of *Judges*, meant that you couldn't describe it as being a simple exercise in resistance theatre, but resistance elements, sort of in it were constant – it certainly didn't come across as a single issue production (2000).

CHAPTER V

ENVIRONMENTAL THEATRE

In the beginning the theatre was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air. The carnival. The feast. Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theatre and built their dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separating actors from spectators: people who act and people who watch – the party is over! Secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonists from the mass. The coercive indoctrination began! Now the oppressed people are liberated themselves and, once more, are making the theatre their own. The walls must be torn down. First, the spectator starts acting again: invisible theatre, forum theatre, image theatre, etc. Secondly, it is necessary to eliminate the private property of the characters by the individual actors: the ‘Joker’ system” (Boal 1974: 119).

The found spaces of environmental theatre can be traced back centuries as this form is typical of fairs, carnival, folk and popular entertainment of the streets. The difference between an environmental space and the proscenium stage is located in the difference in the relationship between the actors and spectators, who in environmental theatre are enclosed within a single spatial configuration which usually brings the spectators closer to the actors in a more immediate hot environment. The spectators may be implicated in the performance in some way, even if only through being lit so they are visible to the actors and each other. In the twentieth century this experimentation with space has been investigated by, among others: Meyerhold, Reinhardt, Grotowski, Brook, Barba and Mnouchkine.

By the mid 1960s in the United States environmental theatre was being used as protest theatre by *The Living Theatre* and *Bread and Puppet Theatre*, who believed that

theatre could make change in society and that theatre could bring the spectators to a new consciousness of social conditions. In Aotearoa New Zealand it was not until the 1980s, when Māori playwrights were beginning to forge their way from an oral to a written tradition, that protest theatre and in particular Māori protest theatre began to find a voice. The works were largely didactic, heavily political, almost Agitprop in confronting the colonisers with their history. Māori political theatre utilised the forms of Māori performing arts including rituals of encounter, waiata and haka, and was often performed on marae as environmental spaces. Theatre groups experimenting with environmental theatre included, *Amameus*, *Stalker Stilt Theatre*, *Red Mole*, *Maranga Mai*, *Te Rakau o te Wao Tapu*, and *Theatre of the Eighth Day*. In relation to the ritual form and content of indigenous performance, Schechner argues that,

the ritual theatre of non-western cultures feeds our own experiments in several ways. First it shows that what we traditionally do is not the only possibility. Obviously the way to develop our own ritual theatre is not to import or museumify actions from other parts of the world. That appetite for bringing everything to Carnegie Hall or the Brooklyn Academy of Music is a tourist approach and not at a deep enough level to do much good (though it doesn't do much harm either). What has begun is an analysis of the structures of non-Western art, how these works are tied into social life, what life-rhythms are paralleled in the art. It is possible to do the same with our own social life and invent or discover patterns that revivify our existence (McNamara 1975: 27).

From the beginning of my concept for directing *Songs to the Judges* I had no thought that it should be performed in a traditional proscenium theatre space. The original production (1980) was sung and set on a stage with quite specific stage

directions, “On one side of the stage, a piano. On the other a dock with a small seat in front of it. Upstage centre a rostrum surmounted by a smaller one. On the smaller rostrum a Judge’s throne” (Thompson: 1983). Balme maintains that, “There existed general agreement that the form of the proscenium stage was inappropriate for new dramaturgical ideas ... the new departure that became evident in the following decades in post-colonial countries was motivated by experiments to incorporate indigenous spatial concepts into the requirements of a syncretic dramaturgy” (1999: 227). My immediate response on reading the play was to double the number of actors so the scenes could be fully dramatised as well as sung, and to have the action surrounded by the spectators for immediacy. It should be performed outdoors utilising architectural space in many ways, for example, with the actors absailing from the roofs of buildings, which idea was inspired by a story told to me by Te Miringa Hohaia of how babies were placed in woven baskets and dropped over the edge of cliffs to keep them safe during the invasion of Parihaka in the 1800s.

The first application for funding to produce *Songs to the Judges* was to the Christchurch City Council for the annual outdoor *Summertimes* production. The proposal was that it should be performed in the round on the brick pavement directly across the Avon River from the Law Courts, with the Judge seated high upon a pole above the spectators and actors. This idea of situating the Judge upon a pole was based on the history of the flagpole as a site of protest for Māori in Aotearoa. In 1844 Hone

Heke three times chopped down the Governor's flagpole, and in 1995 at the Treaty of Waitangi celebrations, protesters (myself included) marched on the flagpole, taking down the New Zealand flag and flying in its stead the Māori flag of independence. For this performance I envisaged the pole being chopped down in every performance at the end of scene 17, *It's Coming*, when the Judge vacated his throne. Unfortunately, the Christchurch City Council did not choose to fund this production.

In 1997 I made my first visit to the Provincial Buildings, highly valued examples of Gothic architecture in Christchurch, and was immediately struck by the thought that this space would be absolutely perfect for staging *Songs to the Judges*. Research revealed that the buildings had been the original seat of government for the Province of Canterbury, and had later been used as the Māori Land Court. The space had also been the first performance space of the Court Theatre (the professional state funded theatre in Christchurch) which Thompson co-founded. Using this historically specific space would have been in accord with Victor Hugo's insistence, "on the importance of site specificity in historical drama: exact locality is one of the first elements of reality. The speaking or acting characters do not alone engrave the faithful impression of facts on the soul of the spectator" (Carlson 1989: 27).

The Provincial Buildings had deep meaning on many levels in relation to the production, politically and historically in terms of Thompson, Māori land claims, and aesthetically it looked like a courtroom with a big red leather chair for the Judge, seats

along each side of the space for the spectators/jury, gallery seating looking down on the action, lead light windows, wooden floor and good acoustics. I wrote to the Mayor of Christchurch with my proposal that this space be used for the performance, and after a number of Council meetings¹ permission was granted to use the space. However, no funding was forthcoming from Creative New Zealand (the national arts funding body), and so the space could not be hired. At this point I was reduced to thinking the performance must be played in a traditional theatre space. The lack of funding for the project meant that many of my plans, including the use of historical documentary film clips during certain scenes, were quashed,

The empty stage is thus more than just a kind of inter-textual reference to the theatre aesthetic of Jerzy Grotowski and Peter Brook. It also carries a political statement about the state of theatre for Blacks in South Africa: in the townships 'poor' theatre is not a self-determined aesthetic credo, but an existential necessity for theatre artists (Balme 1999: 154).

Balme's comment on black South African theatre also applies to much theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand.

By chance or serendipity, at this time (November 1997) I went to see a performance of *Michael James Manaia* by Jim Moriarty at *Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae* in Christchurch. After the performance Moriarty introduced his concept of Marae Theatre, explaining that the performance was a way in which Māori and Pākehā could meet on the marae, offering Europeans the chance to experience Māori culture

¹ Councillors were worried that because of the political nature of the performance, protestors might throw a brick through the lead light windows.

and protocol. Lancaster makes this point, “How is it that I have lived twenty years in New Zealand but never before visited a *marae*? Simple. I had never been invited. A *marae* is not the sort of place where anyone goes stomping up and says: ‘G’day mate: just come for a snoop around” (1993: 36). In my own family, my parents, who were in their 70s, attended a performance of *Songs to the Judges* and it was the first time they had been on a *marae*. Marae Theatre is double edged, an exchange, as it also provides a familiar space in which Māori can be introduced to Western theatre as this has largely not been a part of their cultural practice. Moriarty suggested that Marae Theatre was not necessarily only theatre for Māori but for everybody and was a method to help break down uncertainty and fear between the races, which is often caused by lack of knowledge of the other culture. However, not all Marae Theatre is so inclusive, many performances are in te reo Māori language and performed on *marae* by Māori for Māori. The fact that *Ngā Hau E Whā*² is a national *marae*, welcoming people from all over the world and offering tourist performance, meant this was an ideal place to promote Marae Theatre for a multicultural audience. Moriarty was in the process of establishing with *Ngā Hau E Whā* a programme of theatre performances planned for the following year. As I listened I thought that *Songs to the Judges* could be a play suitable for Marae Theatre, and I discussed this idea with Moriarty and the *marae* elders, and it was accepted as part of the performance programme for 1998.

² Translated as, the four winds.

Marae Theatre is a term first coined by Moriarty in 1979. His ongoing dream for Marae Theatre was published in *The Listener*, 26 September 1991,

Every marae is a theatre. Some of the best acting I've ever seen is the prancing and movement of kuia and kaumatua. Audiences are greeted with a karanga when they arrive for the performance and they are encouraged 'to have a korero' afterwards. Jim Moriarty dreams of establishing a more appropriate venue, in Wellington. We all know how the marae works – the way elders accord hospitality to their guests. I want to take the infrastructure – the people-stuff that makes it work so well – and put that into the framework of theatre ... What you'd say is: the business of this particular marae is to put on performances.

Moriarty has been a theatre practitioner in Aotearoa New Zealand for over thirty years, working with his group *Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu* (The Blossoming Tree of Our Sacred Grove) with a strong determination and commitment to work in the community as well as in mainstream and experimental theatre. *Te Rakau's* performances focus on social issues including drug and alcohol abuse, violence and sex education, with the younger members touring high schools nationally, while the older performers work extensively in prisons and have continuously promoted the idea of Marae Theatre, as well as supporting *Taki Rua* bicultural theatre and working in mainstream theatre and film. *Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu* works as a close whanau combining the traditions of Māori and Pākehā performance, intermixing drama, song, dance and chorus work, "We call it Theatre Marae because we try to wrap our work up in tikanga Maori, upholding the power and authority of the tangata whenua, but not necessarily at the expense of anyone else" (Moriarty: 1996). Tanya Phillips a member

of the group comments, “The spiritual element reaches people. It’s more than ‘What a great performance’, it’s something about being a family which really touches people.

In rehearsal there is an astonishing level of trust and honesty, of give and take between the performers, both on and off stage”. *Te Rakau* work is foremost about affirmation and promotion of culture rather than protest. “The group exists to motivate change, to question apathy, and challenge indifference in a vital and entertaining way. That’s always the reason I’ve been involved in theatre and that’s what it’s about. And why the schools? Why the prisons? Why the marae? Why the small towns? Why the alcohol and drug rehab centres? Because that’s where drama is” (Moriarty: 1996).

Māori playwright John Broughton supports Marae Theatre and his plays *Te Hokinga Mai* (The Return home) and *Marae* are both set on and structured around the marae and its rituals. “Theatre Marae sets out to combine aspects of marae experiences with elements of live theatre. The play is the reason for the gathering, but just as important are the rituals of the hui, where people share in the traditions of the marae. In this way they are not just onlookers or part of the audience, but join in” (Balme: 45). This is a unique way of engendering audience participation, related to the space where the performance is, and the protocols of that space.

The idea of placing *Songs to the Judges* on a marae as Marae Theatre falls into the category of ‘environmental theatre’ where Schechner argues, “Present is the ... impulse to negotiate with all the space in which a performance takes place, including

the spaces usually reserved for spectators” (McNamara et al 1975: 1). Schechner also argues that,

The environmentalist is not trying to create the illusion of a place: he wants to create a functioning space. This space will be used by many different kinds of people, not only the performers. The stage designer is often concerned with effect: how does it *look* from the house? The environmentalist is concerned with structure and use: how does it *work*? Often the stage designer’s set is used from a distance – don’t touch this, don’t stand on that, but everything the environmentalist builds must work. Stage designing is two-dimensional, a kind of propped-up painting. Environmental design is strictly three-dimensional. If it’s there, it’s got to work (McNamara 1975: 14).

Rehearsing and performing on a marae means that one works in a functioning space, as the marae is the public arena for ceremonial meetings of Māori people, where, for example, funerals, weddings, performance rehearsals and communal gatherings take place, plus, at *Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae*, there are daily visits by tourists and kapa haka³ performances at night. In Māori culture all communal events are held on the marae which is an ‘environment invested with the community’s collective identity’ (cc Watson). During the performance the marae space was not-not (Schechner’s term) a marae for the performance but it was also not-not a virtual space, “It was somewhere between the two, it was betwixt and between its functional self and the fantastical locations each of the performers demanded of it ... not-not the place where the community gathered while at the same time it was not-not the various locations

³ Māori performing arts.

suggested by the performances it hosted. It was both home and familiar while at the same time it was collective and foreign” (Watson 2002: 105).

The Protocol of the Marae: hui

Hui is a general term in Maori for any kind of meeting, but when people say they have been to a *hui*, they are nearly always referring to a ceremonial gathering on a *marae*. The *marae* is a local centre, typically owned by a descent-group, with a meeting-house, dining-hall and forecourt for orators (*marae ātea*) (Salmond 1975: 1). It is during the ‘ritual of encounter’ of the hui that Māoritanga (Māori culture) is most fully expressed. The ‘ritual of encounter’ is a balanced exchange between the tangata whenua (local people) and manuhiri (visitors). Privacy is important and in urban areas marae have high fences around the perimeter. “Not only is the *marae* bounded physically by these techniques, but it is also culturally insulated to a remarkable degree. The *marae* in New Zealand is a Maori public place, and perhaps it is the last of these. In this setting Maori culture dominates. The *marae* is visually marked as Maori by its carvings and distinctive architecture: it is spiritually marked by its rituals and the use of Maori language. It is not that Europeans are forbidden access to *marae* ... but the fact remains that most Europeans never attend a *hui* ... Part of the reason, no doubt, is that the *marae* is one major arena left in New Zealand where European culture stands at a disadvantage – the rituals are unknown and the speeches are unintelligible (Salmond 1975: 34).

A ritual can be described as a set activity in a special place, which is performed at regular intervals with specific actions and is culturally efficacious, that is it is performed with a result in end. The efficacy of the hui is to make the two parties one, so that they can conduct their business and separate again. The function of opposites in the ritual of the hui is to find a common ground. The ritualised sense of space on the marae reflects the worldview of Māori. The performance of the rituals of the marae retain symbolic references to the metaphysical, as Soyinka suggests, “the spatial vision

of theatre has become steadily contracted into purely physical acting areas on a stage as opposed to a symbolic arena for metaphysical contests” (Balme 1999: 258).

Rituals of Encounter

Marae Theatre incorporates the rituals of encounter of a hui, which begins with a powhiri (welcome), after which the action of the hui happens, whether that be a performance or a weaving workshop, and concludes with the poroporoaki (farewell feast). “The *hui* is steeped in the past, and its rituals abound with mythological and historical allusions. This is a Maori past, however, reaching back through genealogy to a time before creation, and its account of the historical period differs considerably from those given in New Zealand history books” (Salmond 1975: 7). The powhiri itself, on the marae atea, is a highly structured ceremony which includes such elements as:

Karanga: “The *karanga* is a long, high call which sends greetings, invokes the dead, and brings an emotional atmosphere to the *marae* ... One of the most interesting aspects of the *karanga* is the summons it issues to the dead. By the time the callers have finished the dead are almost tangibly present on the *marae*. All the group, living and dead members alike, are brought together, making a long unbroken chain of kinsmen that stretches right back to Hawaiki and the Pō (Underworld)” (Salmond 1975: 137-140).

Whai kōrero: oratory which uses many proverbs and genealogy. “Maori is the ceremonial language of the *marae* ... Maori is prized as one of the treasures (*taonga*) of the people, and chants, proverbs, genealogies and fine phrases are all valued as gifts from the ancestors” (Salmond 1975: 128).

Waiata: ancient and modern songs which are sung after each speech, usually by the women, but a speaker may begin to sing himself and be joined by a woman or women from his iwi.

Marae atea: the open expanse of land in front of the wharenui, where ritual ceremonies are held, even in heavy rain. The marae atea is the space of Tu-matauenga, the god of war. The two peoples meet and dialogue to establish the terms of the meeting, then the tapu is lifted by them becoming one symbolically in the hongī (rubbing noses together) and entering the wharekai to eat together.

Poroporoaki: Farewell speeches and hākari (feast). At the hākari much food is offered to the visitors, while the hosts may provide entertainment for the guests while they eat. After eating the guests stand to thank the hosts and the cooks, often singing as a way of saying thank you.

There are rules for the order of oratory, and for who may speak and karanga on the marae, “Verbal activity on the *marae ātea* is highly structured, and follows a definite sequence of ritual stages” (Salmond 1975: 6). The procedure to enter the marae for the visitors is to gather at the gate to the marae, the women, wearing black, at the front and in the centre of the men. The visitors can (but do not usually) make a protective incantation waerea outside the gates, and this can be followed by a challenge by the tangata whenua, in the form of a wero, (but these are more often reserved for famous visitors or those with great mana) after which an elderly woman from the local people sends out a call of welcome, a karanga, which is a wailing, and the caller for the visitors replies, women in front of the meeting house will begin a chant or pōwhiri and the visitors begin to move slowly onto the marae, often tangi, or tears of grief for the dead are shed. The visiting men move to the front benches and all sit, the orators for the tangata whenua seated opposite across the marae ātea (open space). The oratory or whai kōrero begins with an elder from the hosts, carrying a walking stick he chants

(tauparapara), when his speech is over, he begins a waiata, and his party will join in the singing in support for him. There are different orders of speaking on different marae, sometimes all the speakers from the host side speak first, or it can be taken turn about, one speech from the host, one from the visitors, and so on until all have spoken. A koha (gift of money) will be placed in the centre of the marae ātea, to pay for the costs of staying on the marae, and it is deemed a matter of pride that a good koha is given. The guests will be called over to hongī, press noses and shake hands with the tangata whenua processing along the line and greeting everybody. This ritual gives the visitors honorary local status and they enter the wharekai (dining hall) for a meal. These rituals of encounter are used whenever Māori groups meet. Māori mythology is the belief system operating on the marae, with the presence of the ancestors, and the reciting of genealogies that can go back to the gods and before the world began, to the underworld of Te Pō and the cosmic void of Te kore kore,

In “European” situations, most Maori people follow a dominantly European conception of reality, one that they have learned at school and in church. The dead go to heaven, buildings are inanimate, New Zealand is divided into counties and governed by Parliament, and its history traces back to Britain. In ‘Maori’ situations, however, and most particularly at the *hui*, these basic assumptions radically shift. The dead go to the “Pō” or Underworld to join their ancestors, the meeting-house is addressed as a person, New Zealand becomes Aotearoa, divided into tribal districts, and its history traces back to Hawaiki (Salmond 1975: 211).

The Meeting House

The meeting house is an alive being, representing the ancestors and the history of the iwi both symbolically and mythologically. The marae of an iwi is its *turangawaewae*, its place to stand, and to speak. Māori people will often emphasise that they do not speak for anyone else but themselves, so to speak on one's *turangawaewae*, gives one permission to be more free in speech than if one was a guest at another marae. Māori link back to their ancestors, their land and meeting house, where the ancestral bones are buried.

The choice of a marae for the performance of *Songs to the Judges* is an example of an indoor environmental space being used as it stands, because of its inherent qualities. Environmental theatre is a radical movement away from the proscenium stage and from naturalism, with the development of thrust stages and work in the traverse, utilising the whole space for performance. The performance of *Songs to the Judges* (1998) was in the whare wānanga (house of learning, 10 x 13 m) which was without fixed seating and was able to accommodate approximately one hundred people. The space was not adapted, because it operated in its normal function during the day, only at night did it lend itself to the play. *Songs to the Judges* was set utilising a traverse stage with the spectators seated on either side of the acting space, the Judge at one end raised above the playing space on a platform, and the dock at the opposite end, with the playing space between the two. This meant that the spectators could see each

other across the space, and that their focus was split between looking at the spectators opposite, the Judge, the Māori actors in the dock, or at actors in the centre of the playing space. At any moment action was happening in more than one place and not usually all in the same direction, so the spectators had to make choices about who and what to watch and when. This use of polymorphic playing can cause some spectators to have problems as this form requires a different way of seeing, of seeing the other spectators across the space looking back at them, and interaction between actor and spectator. Gilbert argues that, “The imperial/patriarchal gaze, therefore, becomes a site/sightline for postcolonial resistance, and if theatrical representation means to undermine its authority, then performance must somehow engage with the looking relations it establishes” (1998: 24-25). Marae Theatre can be used to confront the spectators’ ways of seeing and of understanding as they may not be familiar with the protocol and so not in control as a spectator which may cause them to experience a culture shock.

In environmental theatre the performance and the space are intimately interrelated, it is a physical theatre enacting incidents and historical events right in front of the spectator, immediate, with the actors often moving into the audience. In *Songs to the Judges* the actors at one point, unobserved, slipped behind the spectators and whispered into their ears asking them direct questions, at other times the actors were so close the spectators could feel their breath on their faces, and see their sweat.

For this production the spatial arrangement was taken from Māori protocol and incorporated into the space of the performance overall, from the entrance onto the marae, to the call into the whare, to the seating arrangements to see the performance. The performance was placed inside the ritual frame of a hui, or ritual of encounter, but at the same time this frame was inter-twined to become part of the performance, not kept as a separate entity.

Rehearsing and performing in the whare wānanga was a special honour. It is a house of learning, and in the past was the place where young men spent long winter nights learning their whakapapa to the beat of the tuma tuma, a Māori traditional instrument consisting of two pieces of wood which were tapped together rhythmically to help keep them awake. *Michael James Manaia* was the first performance to be held in this whare wānanga and *Songs to the Judges* the second, so this was quite a new experience for the people of the marae and for us too, to be working in a sacred space.

The whare wānanga has spiritual and symbolic meaning. The Māori worldview sees time as being past, present and future simultaneously, where the ancestors are always present and children are the gateway to the future. The whare usually represents an ancestor of the iwi and is often named after him (in the majority of cases it is a male ancestor). The whole structure represents the body of the ancestor, on the outside the carved head represents his head, the bargeboards his arms and fingers. The centre beam on the inside is his spine and the rafters his ribs, the whole interior is his

stomach and the entrance of the doorway is feminine, often with a carving of a woman with legs spread wide above it. Inside the whare wānanga at *Ngā Hau E Whā* were carvings of different ancestors and paintings (kowhaiwhai – curving shapes traditionally in red, black and white) between the rafters, and tukutuku panels (these were made by women and woven in a cross stitch pattern) on the walls between the carved poupou (poles) representing the figures of the ancestors who are alive and watching all that happens. The carvings tell the whakapapa of the iwi and the paintings have a theme. Being inside the whare wānanga, and looking up at the roof creates a feeling of awe, one is surrounded by history in a museum of ancient knowledge.

The use of the whare wānanga was defined by the concepts of tapu (sacred) and noa (common). “*Tapu* and *noa*, then, are opposite though complementary principles, and they must be kept separate” (Salmond: 42). It is customary in most tribal areas to take off one’s shoes when entering a whare and there are strict rules against eating or drinking inside the sleeping area as food is *noa*. Inside the house left and right are split between tapu and noa, the left side (looking at the door from inside) is tapu and right is noa (although there is sometimes disagreement about which side is which, depending from which perspective one looks at it). The door is on the right and the window on the left side, guests (*waewae tapu* or ‘sacred feet’) will be placed to sit or sleep on the left side as they are tapu, while the hosts will be placed on the right. Another aspect of the spatial structure of the meeting-house is its places of honour. It is a well-known

rule that the most prominent visitor to a *hui* (the *manuhiri tuārangi*, visitor from afar” should sleep just under the front window inside the house, or at that end of the left wall”⁴. Our kaumatua Rai Rakatau would always humbly place himself at the far end of the left wall, beside the ‘back’ door, as far away from the tapu end as possible and on the side of the guests, as he was not tangata whenua, but from the North Island iwi Ngati Haua. This spatial definition of the meeting house was used as part of the form of the play, where the spectators could sit on either side of the house, and those with knowledge of the protocol would sit on the appropriate side, that is, the people of the marae would sit on the right hand side. Of course in a public production where the house is filled every night this may not have been possible, also, I was not monitoring the spectators asking them where and why they sat where they did. However, this spatial structure was enacted in full, when we performed at Parihaka where the whole of the iwi who came to see the performance sat on the right hand side even though it was extremely cramped, and only six of us guests sat on the left side. I was very grateful to my friends who had travelled miles and days to be with me as it was very intimidating to be only six, and strangers, faced by many on the opposite side of the house, and to be retelling or re-presenting their particular history back to them.

The principles of tapu and noa separate ceremonial and sleeping areas from the cooking and eating areas and so after the performance when we held the poroporoaki

⁴ I am grateful for information on the detail of marae spatial arrangement and use to Anne Salmond’s book *Hui*.

(closing ceremony), we moved to the eating house for a cup of tea or coffee (alcohol is banned on many marae as *noa*) and biscuits, and the right of reply for the spectators.

It is considered bad protocol for a group to arrive at a marae after dark as this is the time of ghosts. At *Ngā Hau E Whā*, for the performance of *Songs to the Judges*, some of the protocols of the hui were broken or bent. The audience arrived after dark, for the 8 pm start and purchased their tickets in the office, before gathering in the foyer to await the beginning of the performance. When all were gathered they were taken into the wharenuī, after first removing their shoes, and given an official welcome by the caretakers of the marae, with *kōrero*, *waiata* and an explanation of the aims of the marae to establish Marae Theatre. This was different from ‘proper’ custom as the welcome would normally be outside on the marae ātea. The audience then moved outside onto the marae ātea, where the first scene, *Ahi Kaa*, was performed with fire poi and *taiaha*. At 8pm it was dark and the only lighting was from the poi and *taiaha*, which made rhythmical flashing movements in the darkness with the actors being virtually invisible. At the end of the scene, a *karanga* was called from the porch of the whare wānanga welcoming the spectators into the performance space to take their places on chairs or mattresses along both of the walls.

For the performance of *Songs to the Judges*, the spectators paid their *koha* or ticket price before being welcomed, rather than give the *koha* at the end of the speeches on the marae ātea. The *karanga* was called after the *whai kōrero*, not before the

spectators entered the marae, because the karanga was embedded into the performance and used to call the spectators into the performance space of the whare wananga. The production became part and parcel of the ritual of encounter, as Bharucha reflects on his performances,

I don't see how they could have been envisioned on a 'neutral' territory somewhere in the laboratory of an American theatre department or a Soho loft. In these alien spaces, the examination of 'Indian culture' would have become a self-conscious exercise in the 'restoration of behaviour', where the realities of the culture being explored would have been simulated rather than directly confronted (1993: 150).

The beginning of *Songs to the Judges* was entrenched in Māori protocol which the audience were taken through effortlessly, with the aid of the elders of the marae. At the beginning of the project I had been told that the marae was not known for performance and that we would not get an audience. For the first two or three nights this proved to be correct, but word of mouth went out and for the rest of the season the house was full, with some people being turned away as the seating was limited to 120. The bringing together of Pākehā who had never been onto a marae, and Māori who had never been to a theatre performance was part of the politics of decolonisation of the production, the kaupapa of its bicultural emphasis was the intermingling of the two cultures in the belief that knowledge of the other's culture helps destroy ignorance and prejudice.

Barter

In navigating the seas of bicultural performance, I set out to facilitate an exchange between Māori and Pākehā culture. The emphasis was not on the Pākehā actors learning to perform Māori dance but on learning more about Māori culture, and for the Māori actors to learn more about western theatre practices, in order to perform together. This exchange was a form of barter between the actors in creating the work on a deep level of interaction over many months. On a more shallow level of interaction were the exchanges each night, when after the performance the spectators, usually individually, would respond to the performance by singing or telling stories and where the performances presented by Māori spectators were almost always from, “traditional material with deep socio-historical roots in the community” (Watson 2002: 97). These exchanges on both levels could be described as ‘barter’ in the sense that Eugenio Barba uses the word. “Barba was the first contemporary theatre artist and theorist to formulate a conceptual and functional framework for barter” (Watson 2002: 109). Watson describes barter as, “an orchestrated performance in which the entire event is a socio-theatrical metaphor of its intentions, which are to induce contact and an exchange between different cultures. These intentions are the very structural dynamic of barter itself” (2002: 100).

The Odin Teatret barters began in the early 70s in the South of Italy when the actors demonstrated their actor training to the villagers in Carpignano, and in response

for being able to witness the actors' training, as Barba had asked, the villagers responded in kind by singing local songs and dancing. This model has been utilised by Odin Teatret over the past thirty years in many countries throughout the world,

A barter creates a beginning for a cross-cultural meeting or dialogue, enabling contact between actors and audience, where all become performers and where value is placed on the meeting itself more than the artistic result. However, whilst Odin barter may appear to be totally spontaneous, they are carefully prepared and rehearsed in advance, not purely improvised. The organization of a barter requires one on one meeting with people of the community, a personal dynamic where the village elders or town authorities are persuaded to collaborate, as they will be the hosts to other performers. The barter involves not only the local people being involved in performing, but performance by the Odin actors who have developed special material for these occasions which includes dance, song, music, street, clown and mask performances, when they participate equally with the local community (Bredholt, 2003).

Unlike the performance form of the Odin barter, which are not based on a literary text, what the actors presented in *Songs to the Judges* did have its origin in a literary text, however the performance text was created from improvisations, and whilst Odin Teatret barter is comprised of a collection of fragments of unrelated performances structured like the 'vaudeville show', *Songs to the Judges* was comprised of 19 related songs, in a music hall form. Also, in monetary terms, in a barter, the host group do not pay for a ticket, which the spectators for *Songs to the Judges* did, but, in relation to the spatial dynamics of barter, *Songs to the Judges* was very similar, "In barter, the audience no longer travels to the theatre, the theatre comes to it ... barter takes place at the social hubs and confluences of the cities, towns or villages where people live, work,

relax, and gather” (Watson 2002: 102). As the central communal gathering place for Māori people, the marae was the ideal place to locate a ‘barter’ performance, and in relation to the three stages of the structure of a barter, the ritual of the hui was the same, the gathering of the spectators, the establishing of performance boundaries and the mixing of the two communities at the end in a shared space where the two cultures meet. At *Ngā Hau E Whā* this was in the wharekai when all gathered to eat together at the end of the performance for the poroporoaki where the divisions between actors and spectators were dissolved as the two groups drank tea and ate biscuits together, talking, engaging in what, “Victor Turner calls spontaneous communitas, that is, ‘a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities’” (Watson 2002: 97-8).

In an interview Kai Bredholt, actor of Odin Teatret who has facilitated many barter performances, explained to me that, “A barter is an exchange with the rule: ‘If I sing a song for you, you have to sing a song for me’” (1 April 2003). In this respect, *Songs to the Judges* was not strictly a barter, in that I did not negotiate with the spectators that they should perform back to us, nor did they come as a group having rehearsed a performance. However, by placing the performance within the frame of the ritual of encounter of the hui, a response or exchange of performance was an anticipated result. As Bredholt emphasises, “Barter is about sharing, giving and taking, where exchange is the principle, where a community meets with a theatre group and this meeting in turn

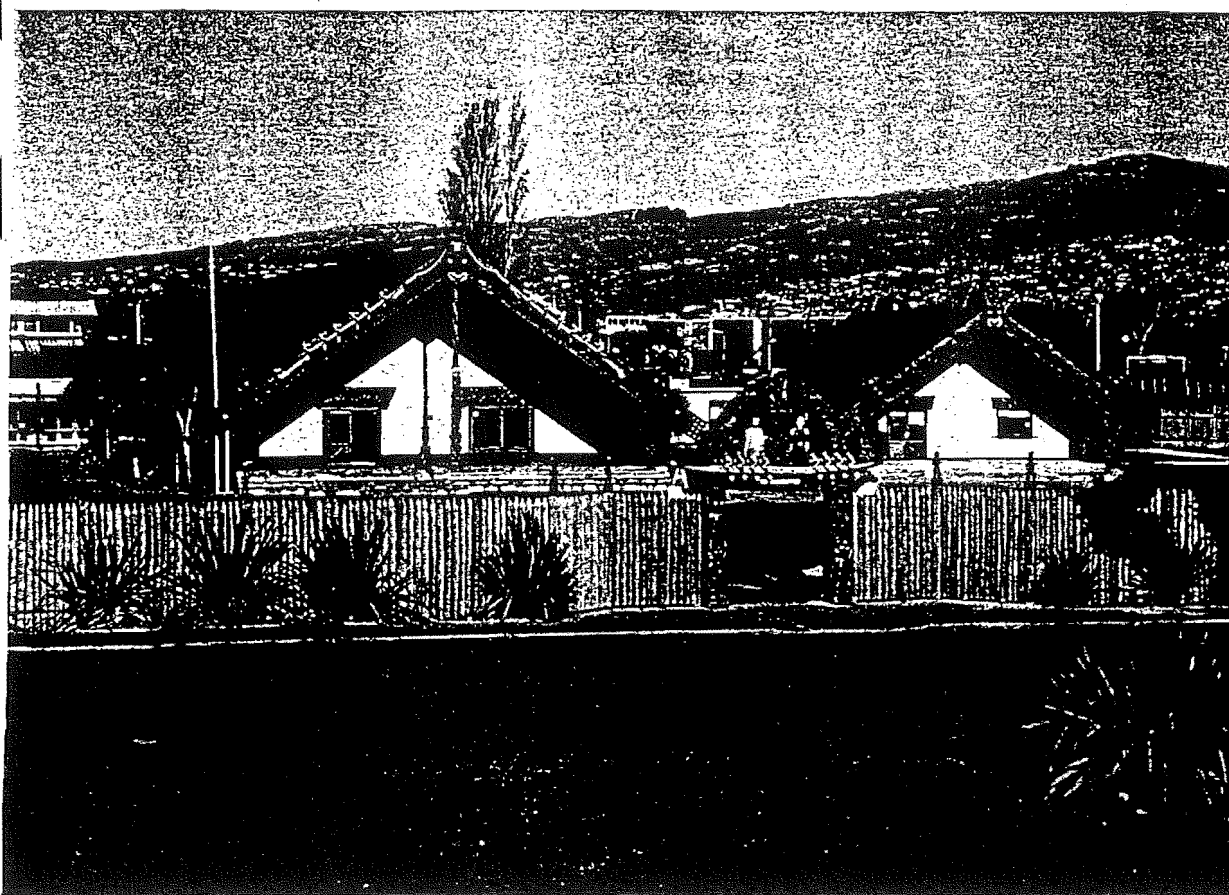
generates meetings between different cultures and sub-cultures, helping to generate tolerance towards others” (2003).

Thompson was deeply committed to the philosophy of theatre having a working relationship with the community within which it lives and the need to value ‘home-grown’ performers and performance, he prophesied that, “One day the genius of the Maori, instead of being locked up in prisons and generally suppressed, will make itself felt in a unique New Zealand art-form, which will amalgamate the more valuable aspects of the imported cultures with the marvellous talent, feeling and blood-drive of the Maori. Then we’ll have something which is the envy of the world” (1980: 162).

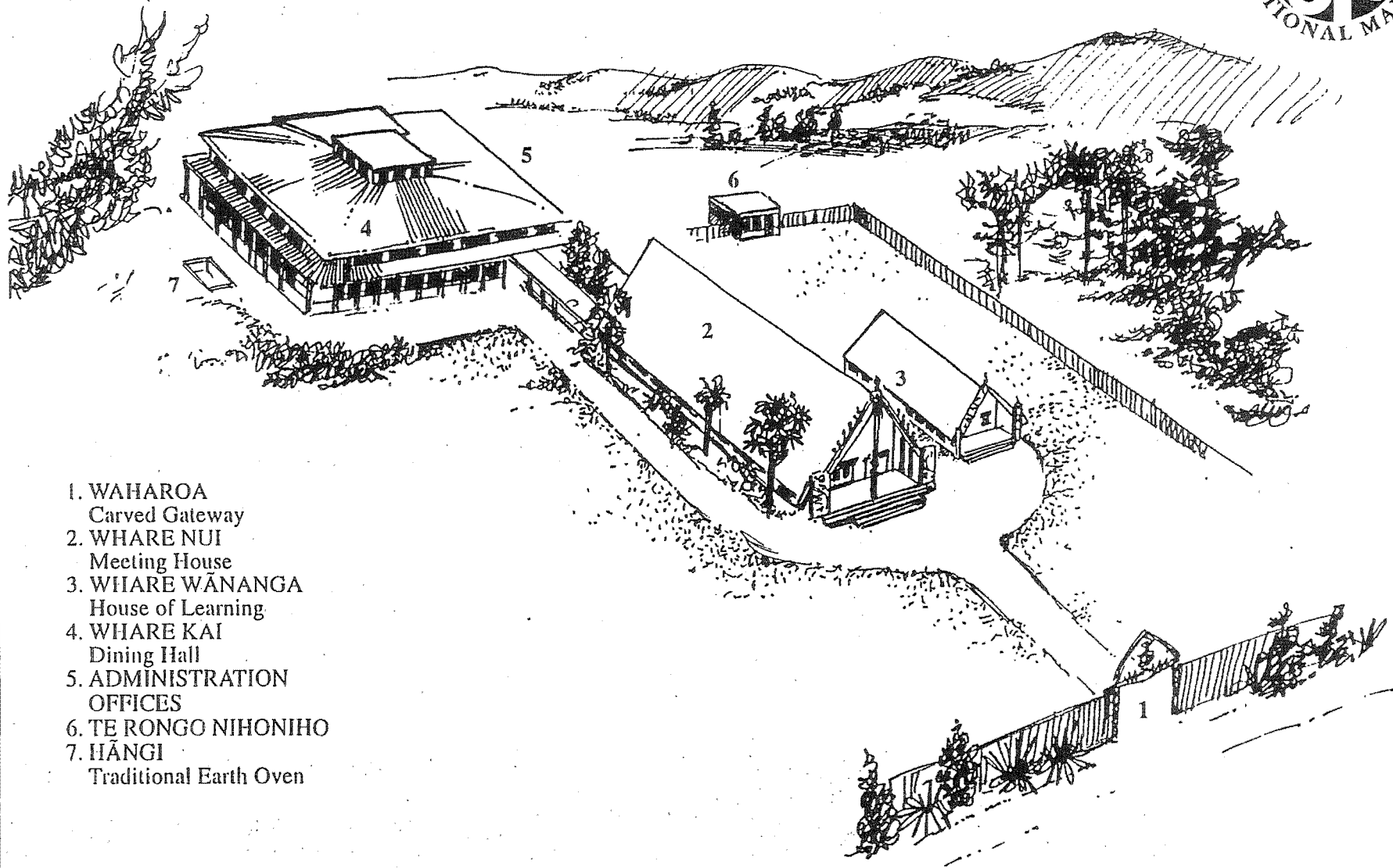
Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae

CHRISTCHURCH

NEW ZEALAND



NGĀ HAU E WHĀ - NATIONAL MARAE



1. WAHAROA
Carved Gateway
2. WHARE NUI
Meeting House
3. WHARE WĀNANGA
House of Learning
4. WHARE KAI
Dining Hall
5. ADMINISTRATION
OFFICES
6. TE RONGO NIHONIHO
7. HĀNGI
Traditional Earth Oven

CHAPTER VI

THE MUSIC OF *SONGS TO THE JUDGES*

The Maori say that the creation of sound in all its forms preceded human existence
(Melbourne and Nunns¹).

Songs to the Judges is a bicultural songplay which juxtaposes sounds from Māori and European culture. The predominant musical forms are based on Gilbert and Sullivan operetta and haka. This soundscape brings together, in the same time and space, the global and the indigenous, the intercultural and the postcolonial, in a hybrid syncretic form. Theatrical syncretism is a response to imperialism, colonisation and decolonisation which “advances the argument that the ‘decolonization’ of the stage can be examined through a number of formal strategies which involve the combination and amalgamation of indigenous performance forms within the framework of the Western notion of theatre” (Balme 1999: 1). The form of the songplay is a politically conscious construction being implicated in ideological issues of postcolonialism. Young posits that, intentional hybridity “enables a contestatory activity, a politicised setting of cultural differences against each other dialogically” (1995: 22). This chapter investigates the different ideologies, or world views, as expressed through the European and Māori musical forms utilised in *Songs to the Judges*, and how these

¹ *Te Ku Te Whe* (1994) CD of traditional Māori instruments, by Hirini Melbourne and Richard Nunns. Melbourne died of cancer in 2003, he was a musicologist, performer, teacher and recording artist. He and Nunns collaborated for 22 years recovering traditional Māori instruments and songs. Nunns, lecturer, Music Department, the University of Waikato, musicologist, international presenter and performer on traditional Māori instruments.

functioned when placed in a dialectical relationship to each other within the performance, exploring Gilbert and Tompkins claim that, “*What a culture communicates is inextricably bound up in how it communicates*” (1996: 200). In *Songs to the Judges* there is a complex musical interweaving between Māori haka, chant, waiata, English Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, music hall and religious music.

The music for *Songs to the Judges* was composed by William Dart². The collaboration between Dart and Thompson began when Thompson approached Dart, who was working with director John Curry at Auckland’s New Independent Theatre, to write music for his next songplay. Dart remembers that Thompson, “wanted to investigate the injustices that the Pakeha land courts had dished out to the tangata whenua over the years” and the process of creation as, “‘Mervyn fed me the lyrics song by song. It was an intense period of writing, but in three weeks we had a show ... Nothing could distract him – not even his son playing billiards with my precious peanut butter glasses while we were both working at the piano’” (Shieff 2002: 130).

The most obvious influence on the form of *Songs to the Judges* is that of Gilbert and Sullivan. When I first heard the recording of Thompson’s production it was nothing like the melodies I had been tapping on the piano, the musical score was much more complex and the rhythm just rushed along, with no pauses. I hated it, the beauty

² William Dart, Senior Lecturer, Music Department, The University of Waikato. Composer, pianist, classical music critic for the New Zealand Herald, broadcaster, journalist, and editor of Art New Zealand.

of the simple melodies was lost, and I asked myself why Thompson had chosen this old fashioned form when the national contemporary trend in music in 1979 was *Split Enz*, *Suburban Reptiles*, *Blerta* and *Toy Love*. I raised this question in an interview with Howard McNaughton,

Lilicherie: I have been wondering why Mervyn would have chosen Gilbert and Sullivan music? I have been thinking 1980, looking at the New Zealand contemporary rock scene at that time, and why because its so sort of old fashioned – who would want to listen to this – it must be the satire and the parody and the idea of colonisation, that that was the music that we brought from England ...

Howard: Oh yes it would have been that. Mervyn in his research, that is Parihaka 1881. He probably sort of thought, what was the music of the colonisers in 1881? – early Gilbert and Sullivan around then. Michael Neil also refers to, in Michael's *Listener* review of *Judges* he refers to, the Governor General's Balaclava like charge at Waitangi. And obviously there was something happening at Waitangi. I think that Balaclava, the Crimean War, was probably about 1881 too, so I just wondered whether Michael referring to that, was actually quoting Mervyn? (McGregor: 2000).

Six of the songs are based on Parihaka, the site of passive Māori resistance in the 1880s. Gilbert and Sullivan was the fashionable musical form of the time and using it gave Thompson license to mock the law courts of this country, the repressive state apparatuses (Althusser³). But theatre too plays a role in controlling or influencing society, it is an institution, an ideological state apparatus, operating with more oblique means. In *Songs to the Judges* is Thompson parodying not only the imperial legal institutions, through the content, but also the institution of theatre itself, through the form of the songplay? As Boire suggests,

³ Althusser, Louis. 'Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Essays on Ideology*. London: Verso, 1971.

Most striking in *Judges* is Thompson's radical re-writing of colonial history *within* the form of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, one of the most beloved forms throughout the heyday of the British Empire. As a subversive parodic representation of yet another representation, *Songs to the Judges* effects a dialectical 'dis-mantling'. The commingling of two kinds of 'theatre' (legal and musical) not only impeaches both the law and justice as middle-class luxuries or fictions, it also points up the ideological values intrinsic to this form of popular entertainment ... Both law and middle-class theatre, Thompson implies, are mirror re-presentations of the same power (Boire 1991: 20).

The theatre form itself can be seen as a means of colonisation. Gilbert and Sullivan was popular in the Victorian age of empire building, it is the music of colonisation, the form that was imported from Europe to dominate the stages of colonial New Zealand at a time when indigenous performance was not valorised by the colonisers. It can be claimed that Thompson utilised the Gilbert and Sullivan form, as the music and theatre of the colonisers, 'to investigate the injustices that the Pakeha land courts had dished out to the tangata whenua over the years' but there is a need to place this within a wider context of theatre and performance in Aotearoa New Zealand from the time of colonisation, and how this may have effected Thompson in his creation of the songplay.

Music Hall

One musical influence in Aotearoa New Zealand was the British music hall which originated in the 1850s in the large industrial centres in England. Music hall began in the public houses, but the emphasis on alcohol quickly developed to being on entertainment and large buildings were built especially for the business of entertaining

the middle and working classes, attracting up to 25,000 young factory or mill workers a week. The roots of music hall were in the Judge and Jury shows, which featured clowning, pantomime, singing, dancing, melodrama, and saloon theatres which attracted a lower and working class audience. With the industrial revolution a new phenomenon emerged, that of leisure time for the working classes and music hall was the visible commercialisation of this leisure becoming an integral part of working class culture. Before this time, leisure had been the privilege of the aristocracy, but with leisure time including all classes, the possibilities for the intermingling of classes increased. As Cunningham points out, leisure for the working classes posed a threat for the industrialists and needed to be officially controlled,

Once we begin to think of leisure as a form of production with specific social relations of production (and for Marx, remember, it was the relations of production which constituted the economic structure), then our understanding of it is transformed. We can see not only the fact that it is something active and changing, not simply a resource, but also why that should be so. But, and this is where Gramsci's thought becomes important, it is active and changing within a complex interlocking of economic, political, social and cultural forces in a total situation of dominance and subordination. In the nineteenth century, in the complicated and ongoing process whereby hegemony was established and maintained, leisure was important. At the outset it was perceived to pose a real threat. It was an economic problem, for its quantity and irregularity for the mass of the people were counterposed to the work ideals of the industrialists. And it was a political, social and moral problem for its practice, and the ideology bound up with that practice, could be threatening, disorderly and immoral (Cunningham 1980: 198).

In England the Theatre Regulation Act (1843) was passed, which was in part aimed at the saloon theatres, for under the Act the saloons had to become either theatres

without refreshments or music halls with drinks licences, but without the right of producing stage plays. With this Act a separation between theatre (legitimate) and song and dance (illegitimate) was legalised in Britain. This socialisation (or ideology) was brought with the settlers coming to Aotearoa New Zealand and the prejudice against song and dance as not 'proper entertainment' could have extended to a judgement of indigenous performance forms which utilised song and dance, as not high art.

In the Victorian period, music-hall entertainment was designed for and patronized by working-class and lower-middle-class audiences who mingled and drank and ate and could ignore or talk back to the performers, themselves mostly from working-class backgrounds. The atmosphere was never 'respectable' except in the days of the genteel decline of the halls (Robinson 1991: 64-70).

The structure of music hall was comprised of a series of interdisciplinary 'turns' or acts for fun, as in the style of Charlie Chaplin. Jokes were often at the audience's expense and actors played the master or rich young man about the town. It had a comic form utilising song and dance, parody of other players, talking at cross purposes, and was often vulgar with the dropping of pants, and jokes about urination and stinking breath (all the attributes of carnival where the body orifices are celebrated) with an emphasis on entertainment. The costumes and dialogue parodied the rich, employing bowler hats and posh accents, with interaction between audience and performers involving the audience in the performance atmosphere. Music hall often used a

question and answer form, and sentimental songs, but the topics of the songs did not always lend themselves to comedy, the content being in contradiction to the form.

This structure juxtaposes high farce and documentary conflict. These influences can be seen in *Song to the Judges* where the whole play is a series of songs or turns in different styles; the high farce of the Gilbert and Sullivan form is in contradiction to the documentary based lyrics of the songs; the use of the question and answer form for the trial scenes; and the posh accents of the Judge and lawyers are at times countered by voices in te reo Māori. Gilbert and Tompkins point out that, “Music hall’s populist appeal is championed by playwrights who are keen to bring working-class experience to a stage that generally caters for ‘higher’ tastes. Because it can invest critical worth in a ‘low-cultural’ form, music hall is also an appropriate genre through which to critique the class hierarchies that colonialist discourse erected” (1996: 199).

Gilbert and Sullivan

However, more directly than music hall, it is Gilbert (librettist and director) and Sullivan (composer) that has a direct influence on *Songs to the Judges*. Set at the height of Imperialism, the Victorian age of Empire Building, Gilbert and Sullivan was the contemporary music of colonisation. Obviously the satire of Gilbert is partly what attracted Thompson to this form, and a direct inspiration may have been based on *Trial by Jury* produced in 1875. A trial play, set in a law court, it was sung with no prose conversation. It was Gilbert’s idea to set the text entirely to music and link the songs

with short lines of verse, in an operatic form, with solos by The Plaintiff and Defendant and the ensemble as chorus. Musically,

Sullivan turned the ensemble into a jest of his own. Earlier in the operetta, he had 'hailed' the Judge in a parody of Handel's grandest oratorio manner, comically burdened with repetitions. Now he made 'A nice dilemma' into a parody of a typical 'dilemma' ensemble of Italian opera - specifically the ensemble beginning 'D'un pensiero' ... Sullivan uses the same kind of musical figure, the same dominating rhythm, and the same key - and even lets the chorus chop up the syllables nonsensically ('A nice/di-lem/-ma we/have here') in simulation of the *oom-cha-cha* or 'big guitar' effect so characteristic of the Italian opera chorus" (Jacobs 1984: 90).

From this account we can see that both Gilbert and Sullivan were utilising parody in writing both the lyrics and the music. There is a complex parodic layering of form and content creating a polysemic reading. Thompson may also have been influenced by Gilbert's "counter-marshalling of opposed choruses - rapturous maidens and Guards officers, giggling schoolgirls and stiff Japanese gentlemen" (Jacobs 1984: 93) in his vocal and physical staging of opposing Pākeha and Māori choruses.

The international and political context at the beginning of Gilbert and Sullivan's collaboration was Disraeli's first ministry (1874-80) under Queen Victoria. During this period of high imperialism, Sullivan travelled frequently and whilst in Egypt in 1882 saw the Dancing Dervishes and became fascinated by Arab music and dance. In 1885, quick to take advantage of the prevailing fashion, they produced the most popular of their operettas, *The Mikado* which exuded the orientalism of a London revelling in Japanese exotica, "The Japanese had, by 1885, taken over every drawing-room in sight,

with fans” (Brahms 1975: 138). Gilbert insisted that the costumes be made of ‘pure Japanese fabric’ and sought out a ‘geisha girl’ to teach his cast ‘authentic’ Japanese gestures. Whilst in *The Mikado* Gilbert was satirizing the institutions of Great Britain, it is often the case with satire and irony that unless the audience are familiar with what is being satirized, they do not necessarily understand the humour and read the performance as ‘straight’. And this was, for at least a portion of the audience, the case with *The Mikado*, as Brahms makes clear, “it is the solid and comic fact that *The Mikado* was actually forbidden in England because *it was a satire on Japan* ... I doubt if there is a single joke in the whole play that fits the Japanese. But all the jokes in the play fit the English” (1975: 144). In this case the ‘historicization’ back fired, the placing of the action in another culture and location to make it accessible to self critique failed, maybe because the illusion was too smooth. Gilbert was practising an early form of interculturalism, copying Japanese gestures and ways of walking. The Japanese were not the only ‘other’ referenced in the operetta, so too were nigger minstrels which were in the 1880s a highly popular form of entertainment, the humour hinging on the incongruousness mismatch of songs and costumes and satirical comment on society. Minstrels were also suggested by Gilbert in relation to *Utopia (Limited)* (1893) which is set on a South sea island with a king who sends his daughter⁴ to be educated in England. The island is turned into a ‘limited company’ by the

⁴ Played by Gilbert’s American discovery Nancy McIntosh, a white woman playing an islander.

English who remodel it as a simulation of England. When the islanders revolt

‘Government by Party’ re-establishes law and order. This plot could well be that of the colonisation of New Zealand - in very simplistic terms. In a note to Sullivan, Gilbert suggests, “Don’t you think that a nigger prelude with bones, tambourine, banjo etc. would introduce the king’s song very well?” (Jacobs 1984: 348). Jacobs comments that, “In the suggestion of a ‘nigger prelude’ is the germ of the most audacious musical stroke in the opera, itself part of the most brazen scene of satire in the whole Gilbert and Sullivan canon” (Jacobs 1984: 348).

Minstrelsy

Blackening up was customary in English culture for Morris dance, processions, circus and pantomime. However, minstrelsy was the specific impersonation of black people by white men. Black minstrelsy portrayed ‘niggers’ singing and dancing. Here, the verisimilitude of the theatre comes into question. Where does an audience of white English middle/working class draw the line between reality and non-reality when confronted by Afro-Americans, or by white men in black face? For the Victorians there was an interesting cross-over between their own traditions of blackening up and black-face, where white men impersonated black people. Were the mask and costume seen as conventions or as reality? “What minstrelsy assimilated most of all from popular custom and traditional vernacular drama was the licence which blackening-up afforded, creating a cultural space bracketed off from the moral rules and regulated

behaviour of mundane reality, but it did this at once via an association with black people” (Pickering 1986: 79). This representation was being performed by white men putting on black masks, by becoming ‘real’ negroes they could play out all the repressions denied in respectable daily life. It was a time of carnival, in Bakhtin’s⁵ terminology, turning the authority system on its head and indulging in socially inverted behaviour, dependent on disguise. The white man who put on the black mask modelled himself on the stereotype of black man as lustful, animistic, uncivilised - all the things that the white had repressed were let out and given the name of black characteristics. By mimesis they became the people they were caricaturing. Whilst this performance could be parodic and satirical mocking the conventions of society, it at the same time portrayed black people as all that was antithetical to Victorian English society.

‘Nigger’ minstrelsy created misconceptions for the English because of their lack of first hand experience of black people and reversed the conception of the black as ‘noble-savage’ who was a faithful servant, a spiritual Christian and suffering slave, into the minstrel stereotype of lazy, pagan and lusty “niggers” singing and dancing and playing banjos. Between 1820 and 1870 minstrelsy was one of the most popular entertainments in the United States, having begun as the imitation of the dance step ‘Jim Crow’, an old limping black, as deviant to the puritan work ethic and the control of body and

⁵ Bakhtin, MM. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

sexuality. White performers dressed as slaves and blacked their faces offering 'authentic' slave songs and jokes,

In the US the emergence of minstrelsy coincided with the slavery debate in the 1840s. It is argued that the grossly caricatured version of 'negro' peculiarities and culture which the minstrels portrayed satisfied a deep-rooted need to conceive of blacks as radically different from free, white Americans. This was especially the case in the 1850s when slavery became the centre of a struggle to destroy the Union and to allow blacks to challenge whites for land, jobs and status (Pickering 1986: 82).

After the demise of slavery, minstrelsy grew as a form and in popularity.

Ostendorf suggests that a reason for this was fear, whites afraid of racial intermixing and cultural mixing. The fear of whites becoming black, Fanon⁶ maintains that the settler posited the native as evil because of his fear of the black man: of his virile capacity, of the rape of white woman, of murder. The white minstrels did not perform black folk culture, but presented a stereotype, a caricature. However, this was a recognition of black culture and over time led to the influence of black music and dance on American popular culture, "In minstrelsy American vernacular culture began to imitate, incorporate and acknowledge the black idiom" (Ostendorf 1982: 66).

In Victorian England there was no large black population, the rise of popularity of minstrelsy occurring at the same time as industrialisation and the new leisure time and music hall. Whilst the English middle-class could empathise with anti-slavery for

⁶ Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth*.

the United States they did not equate this with the slavery of the working classes in England.

Minstrelsy was just as much about English social relations as it was about a scantily known Afro-American population ... Race relations abroad were perceived in the light of class relations at home. It is this which links, in official and popular discourses, the derogatory images of 'negroes', Jews, Irish, hooligans, working-class 'roughs', criminals and whores: essentially they all belonged to a perpetually lower order that was defined by its antithetical contrast with English gentility (Pickering 1986: 84).

Minstrelsy performances set stereotypes of black character that still exist today and have been applied to any people of colour. These stereotypes portrayed the idea of the native as racially inferior, but at the same time exoticised, creating a desirable spectacle, an object of pleasure.

The structure of minstrelsy developed from solo performances to a full show and its tone moved from being rough to genteel, being accepted as family entertainment, whereas music hall was never 'respectable'. The first genuine British music hall to come to Aotearoa New Zealand was brought by Harry Rickards in 1872 but was not popular being too vulgar for the colonists who preferred Variety, vaudeville and minstrel shows,

right from the time in 1852 when 'Mr Howard's Ethiopian Serenaders and Gymnast Company' had first thrilled local audiences with 'some daring leaps, somersaults, evolutions on the flying cord, a laughable farce and a number of nigger melodies with banjo, bones and violin accompaniment.' All of this, according to the Wellington *Independent's* report, was 'passed off with considerable spirit' ... Since then the country had been toured by innumerable other professional groups of 'Ethiopian Serenaders', 'Nigger Minstrels', 'Sable

Operatic Harmonists', and many more with equally exotic names, all of whom had their local imitators also resplendent in bright costumes and burnt cork (Downes 1975: 142-3).

In 1900 in Aotearoa New Zealand *John Fuller and Sons' Melbourne Waxworks* format of variety show, derived from minstrel shows, was very popular. Its structure, like the minstrel format, began with the actors in black face sitting on chairs across the stage with Mr Bones and Mr Tambo (black face) on either end and Mr Interlocutor (white face) in the centre. The first section of the performance comprised of jokes between these actors, whilst the second part featured solo performances, with a farce for the finale. This was safe entertainment for the whole family, no vulgarity in minstrel shows! By the 1920s the vaudeville show was well established in all four major centres, and a few local artists, for example, the Kiwi Sunshine Players performed alongside the international performers.

The comedy of the early minstrel shows was inclusive of black people, even though it laughed at them. It worked because of the opposites in play, black/white, rich/poor. Critiquing minstrelsy is a way to study inter-relationships between people of different race and class. It was a pre-industrial plantation world representing a master/slave dynamic in the form of the entertainment. At first whites put on the mask and played out the repressed in their lives, then blacks blacked up and imitated the whites imitating them, as a way of acting on the stage, and earning money, and it was the first stage on which blacks could represent their own culture. When there was a

mixed audience the black actors could play for the white spectator the racial stereotypes, but with a subtext for the black spectator, a strategy employed in *Songs to the Judges* (1998). These double strategies of playing support Bhabha's⁷ suggestion that mimicry may be a way of eluding control, "Bhabha suggests that colonial authority is rendered 'hybrid' and 'ambivalent' by this process of replication, thus opening up spaces for the colonised to subvert the master-discourse" (Loomba 1998: 89). An imitation of an imitation of themselves, this double-consciousness was often lost on white audiences, who only saw the stereotypes acted out.

Early Performance in Aotearoa New Zealand

That variety, based on minstrelsy, was popular entertainment in Aotearoa New Zealand, has played a part in creating Pākehā prejudice where, "For the prejudiced group, the major stereotypes were not especially local to New Zealand but reflected general white stereotypes of the 'other': lazy, shiftless, dependent, untrustworthy and so on ... there was nothing special about anti-Maori attitudes here, because the prejudiced knew so little about Maori people and their background" (Ritchie: 195-196). Traditional minstrel shows were very popular in Aotearoa New Zealand until the 1960s. However, in 1980 when Thompson cast Margaret Blay, a Pākehā woman, in brown face to play a Māori male (because he was missing an actor) it was no longer perceived as politically correct for Pākehā to represent Māori on the stage. Roma

⁷ Bhabha, HK. 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *October* 28, Spring: 1984. (125-33).

Potiki, among others, critiqued him severely for this. With the Māori ‘renaissance’ and the rise of Māori playwrights it was the goal for Māori to represent themselves on stage and break the stereotypes that had been established, which some had come to believe about themselves.

This examination of minstrelsy is included because it discloses how racial prejudice was in part established through performance and illustrates how powerful a weapon performance can be, as Boal claims⁸, and that this weapon can be utilised by oppressed peoples in the process of decolonization. In directing *Songs to the Judges* my casting choices were influenced by these issues, for example, the decision of whether to cross-cast or not. Cross or free casting was considered as an option, but I chose not to, deciding to go with the ‘essentialist’ representation of Pākehā by Pākehā and Māori by Māori, letting the stereotype of ‘they can all sing and dance’ prevail. In fact, however, the Māori actors who volunteered to perform could not all sing and dance and only one spoke te reo Māori fluently.

In Peter Downes book *Shadows on the Stage - Theatre in New Zealand - the first 70 years* there is virtually no mention of Māori performance as theatre. Theatre was not by people here, theatre was in the form of touring shows with actors from England, Australia and America. However, one locally composed opera is mentioned,

The year 1903 was notable for the world premiere in Wellington on 16 February of Alfred Hill’s locally composed opera *Tapu*. It was described as ‘a

⁸ Boal, Introduction to *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

romantic Maori comic opera' but the libretto by Arthur Adams took a great deal of licence with Maori tradition. It told of a modern tribe with cannibalistic tendencies preparing to cook and eat a politician who had come from Australia with the intention of combining the two countries under one government. Hill's songs were tuneful but they too bore little relation to Māori folklore although a number of bright scenes were included which featured poi and dances and hakas ... the opera was not altogether a success. It had turned out to be part contemporary comic opera and part Maori concert. By falling between the two styles it succeeded in neither (Downes 1975: 139).

This cutting criticism of one of the first bicultural performances in Aotearoa New Zealand highlights the battle that was looming for an indigenous form of theatre to gain a foothold. The critique of falling between two styles discloses the distaste for the half-caste, the non-pure form in the colonialists attempts to mimic the culture of the home country. The production however, toured successfully in South Africa playing to large audiences.

In the 1800s Pākehā were obsessed with the idea of Māori being cannibals.

Visiting American actor Joseph Jefferson who stayed in 'Wikawite'⁹ in 1864 reports,

I took up my abode at a little hotel at this place, surrounded by the native Maoris. Of course these people were in a semi-civilized state, though they had formerly been cannibals, and when out fishing with them I could not help smiling at Sydney Smith's description of a New Zealand lunch, "with cold missionary on the sideboard" ... 'I saw a party of them act in a play that had been written to show off their sports and ceremonies, and in one of the scenes where they were tracking an enemy the grace and earnestness with which they moved were surprising' (Downes 1975: 59).

⁹ Waikouiti, 30 minutes drive North of Dunedin.

When Māori were cast in turn of the century performances it was as 'exotic' items of spectacle in an equally exotic landscape featuring bright volcanoes and geysers.

Mervyn Thompson

Thompson sought to make performances for the working classes and turned to Gilbert and Sullivan and music hall as traditional sources of popular entertainment. However, his influences are not delimited to those from Britain and the popular in Aotearoa New Zealand, being also influenced by European artists including Brecht. In his stage directions for *Lovebirds* he specified Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* as the musical score. Wagner's advocating of a synthesis of all the arts in theatre and his music-dramas, could be seen as a strong influence on Thompson's songplays,

It was contended on many sides that a book like *The Ring of the Nibelung* could not be set to music. Certainly it could not be after the fashion of an ordinary opera. Perhaps people were so accustomed to the books of nonsense which figured as opera librettos that they thought *The Ring of the Nibelung* was so great a work that its action and climaxes were beyond the scope of musical expression. For such, Wagner has placed music on a higher level. He has shown that music makes a great drama greater (Harewood 1969: 230-31).

Wagner

Richard Wilhelm Wagner (1813-1883) conductor and composer, rebelled against melodrama which was the then popular form in theatre, advocating in its stead a unity of the arts in theatre, incorporating music, dance, song, speech and acting, to achieve the utmost illusion. Wagner dreamt of a populist theatre, rebelling against the

elegant opera house of the moneyed classes and “the rise of the socialist movement toward the end of the century gave new impetus to this vision, especially in Germany, where the Volksbühne (people’s stage) movement created Europe’s first monumental theatres of the proletariat” (Carlson 1989: 89). Whilst Thompson also strived for a national non-elitist theatre, he found his themes in history and the social forces at play in a situation, not from archetypes and mythology as Wagner did.

Songs to the Judges

The above is a brief introduction to the Western theatrical forms most popular in Aotearoa New Zealand during settlement, which may have influenced Thompson’s development of the songplay. They carried ideological baggage that included, class consciousness, nationalism, and the reinforcement of stereotypes for coloured people. Thompson’s songplay utilises the Victorian music hall in a political working class tradition with Gilbert and Sullivan satire, “to signify patronising and simplistic representations of Pākehā and Māori history... Parodying the self-righteous discourse that Thompson found to characterise New Zealand self-representations as well as localising the more imperial Gilbert and Sullivan melodies, music in *Songs to the Judges* becomes culturally specific” (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996: 199-200). These Western traditions did not recognise indigenous performance forms as theatre. Thompson’s first songplays *O Temperance!* and *Songs to Uncle Scrim* were political and influenced from a Western tradition, but in *Songs to the Judges* he combined the

indigenous and the Western in a bicultural songplay. This songplay combines Western popular entertainment forms informed by historical events and Māori performance forms, based on mythology and a belief in the creation of the world through music,

Melbourne in his analysis of Māori music has discovered, 'There are a number of traditions which talk about the origins of music. I particularly like the Kai Tahu one. It begins, 'Te waiata tangimai te atua ko te timutanga o te ao – the gods sang the world came into being.' Our music started when the gods created the universe – when sound made things happen.' Musical sound, therefore, was the extension of thought into the physical world, and a potent force for weaving together the flux of the spiritual and the material" (Shieff 2002: 141).

What is being combined in the bicultural songplay are two different world views through representative performance forms, one based on the satire of Gilbert and Sullivan, and the other based on Māori performing arts including haka, waiata and music. The lyrics over these musical forms are based on the history of race relations in Aotearoa New Zealand, creating a synthesis of the historical and the mythical within the one form. The historical is a linear narrative, whilst the mythological links to the holistic world view of Papatuanuku and Ranginui¹⁰. Thompson was beginning to touch on a popular form of theatre or performance for Māori and Pākehā, which Wagner puts voice to, describing the folk as everyone who made up a community and defining *mythos* as the poem of the folk encompassing the beginning and end of history.

Wagner was influenced by Beethoven, in particular his Ninth Symphony which uses

¹⁰ In the Māori creation myth Papatuanuku, the earth mother, and Ranginui, the sky father, are locked in an embrace keeping their children in a world of darkness between them, until their son Tane Mahuta (god of the forest) forces them apart bringing light to the world.

language with music, “What Wagner sought to capture was the movements of the soul. What he wanted to seize upon was jealousy itself, or love itself, and not the complicated actions in everyday life that gave rise to it” (Godman and Sprinchorn 1970: 25). This desire for immediacy is reminiscent of Artaud’s ‘performance’ of his lecture on the plague¹¹. This conflation of language and music has a resonance with some Māori traditional instruments, for example, the Pakuru which is played while the musician also hums the tune, and the Rooria which is used to suggest words, the player making sounds and moving the lips, making the instrument speak.

In this engagement between cultures we are immediately thrown into a clash between an oral and a written culture. Before European settlement Māori did not have a written language. Western music was usually written down as a score having been developed using notation. Māori music was not. But, even the word oral evokes different assumptions across cultures. McLean claims that the vital ingredient of folk music is oral transmission, “First of all one man sings a song, and then others sing it after him, changing what they do not like” (1975: 13). However, for the Chinese, music has the power to keep harmony or to destroy the universe, “Thus, pitch and scales were carefully regulated lest an error in their organization should bring about a downfall of the State” (McLean 1975: 24). Between only these two examples a clear difference in ideology is expressed, between the idea of folk music as an oral tradition

¹¹ Artaud, A. *The Theatre and its Double*.

that is handed down by word of mouth and changed according to aesthetic taste, and music that is handed down by word of mouth linked to the stability of the universe and life itself, so that if the singer were to make an error disaster would occur. This is also the case in Māori culture, where it is paramount that the transmission of knowledge is accurate, for example, that a *karakia* has no error. Gilbert and Tompkins claim that, “Indigenous song/music recalls pre-contact methods of communication, affirms the continued validity of oral traditions, and helps to break the bonds of conventional (western) representation” (1996: 194).

Songs to the Judges 1998 – Music

The music for *Songs to the Judges* was fraught with complex circumgyration from both the European and Māori perspectives. Whilst initially my way into the songplay was to tap out the melodies on the piano creating my own rhythms around the notes - so that I heard the music inside my head in quite a different interpretation to that of the recording of the original performance directed by Thompson. Not a trained musician or singer I was oblivious to the complexities of Dart’s score and these became increasingly obvious as the actors struggled hour upon hour to master the many irregularities.

Thompson was seeking a retelling of history from more than one perspective with his dialectical form of the songplay, but his production did not extend far enough in extending the expression of Māori performing arts. My kaupapa for the production

was for an equal contribution from both Māori and Pākehā in all facets of the performance. One strand of this conception related to the music and I endeavoured to have Māori traditional instruments contributing to the musical component. I wrote to Richard Nunns (maker and player of traditional Māori instruments) introducing myself and the proposal, “The rehearsal period will be treated as a time of cultural interaction between Māori and Pākehā and I see it as being as important as the final production. As part of this process I would like to strip away the Gilbert and Sullivan flavour of the songplay replacing it where possible with traditional Māori instruments ... What I hear on the sound recording of the original performance of *Songs to the Judges* is a very heavy sound, with a very fast rhythm that rushes through the play. What I imagine ... is something generally much much slower, with haunting melodies and voices, sometimes (especially at the beginning) without musical accompaniment, creating different moods and images ... Mervyn’s brother Andy Thompson, who is a musician ... is very interested in collaboration and I wonder if you might be interested in being involved in this collaboration on some level?” (Letter to Richard Nunns from Lilicherie 8.9.97). Nunns replied, “I would happily talk with you about the music and other ramifications. I am also happy to talk about my involvement with Mervyn ... from what seemed like an endless involvement in *Marat/Sade*. I also played Musgrave for him in *Sergeant Musgraves Dance* by John Arden a real baptism of fire.”

Nunns and I began a collaboration with the aim of him playing Māori traditional instruments in or for the performance. We discussed the appropriateness of incorporating the instruments into Dart's composition and the necessity to adhere to Māori protocol acknowledging that in Māori culture each instrument was played for a specific purpose and that this should be honoured, "Entertainment was music's least important function. In all its forms, music was tied up with the deities who governed everything they did in everyday life'" (Shieff 2002: 141). Nunns was mindful that Māori instruments were used for specific purposes and we scrutinised the script for situations where it would be appropriate to play different instruments. Nunns introduced the *tuma tuma*, the tapping of stone and wood as a sound associated with learning processes, a sound well known in the *whare wananga* (house of learning) in Te Wai Pounamu (South Island). This instrument would have been appropriate as we were to perform in the *whare wānanga* at *Ngā Hau E Whā*. An element of the research and our relationship working together would involve defining what was happening in the text and endeavouring to identify the instrument that might be played and for what purposes. The questions we asked were not only about the aesthetic qualities of the music but also what its function was. Often, in Māori culture music is used in a ritual context, for example, in the protocol of the *hui* the *karanga* is used to bring the visitors onto the *marae*. Whilst Nunns and I were being quite pedantic about the use of the instruments, his colleague Hirini Melbourne has commented, "In the past, music had its

own profound function in every aspect of life. I can't say how another tribe should use the instruments today, but as far as I'm concerned there's only one rule – the survival of the art-form. As long as the instruments are looked after and treasured, they should be heard" (Shieff 2002: 137). Melbourne, leading Māori ethnomusicologist and singer, and Nunns, researcher, maker and player of Māori traditional instruments collaborated to make a CD entitled *Te Ku Te Whe*, recording traditional instruments and chants. Melbourne says about the starting point for the recording, "The Tuhoe whakapapa that accounts for the origins of the spiritual and physical world includes the origin of sound: te ku me te whe. Te ku are the softer sounds associated with the forest and the birds, and te whe are the sharp sounds which include the metallic sounds" (Shieff 2002: 147).

The directorial choice to include Māori traditional instruments as a musical element of *Songs to the Judges* was not a simple matter, as there are few people in Aotearoa New Zealand who can play these instruments, and if the project had been successful may have helped in the recovery of this almost lost tradition. Melbourne (Māori) and Nunns (Pākehā) have been collaborating on the recovery and saving of Māori musical instruments and songs. Melbourne comments on his and Nunns travels to marae and their talks with old people about the traditional instruments in their reclaiming of a lost tradition, "We were talking to people in their nineties, and they were remembering not their parents, but their grandparents. The traditions died out

very early, so these were memories going back before the nineteenth century” (Shieff 2002: 143). As one of the actors in *Songs to the Judges* angrily explained to me when I queried her on an aspect of Māori culture she did not know, there is a difference in the access to knowledge between Pākehā and Māori culture. Pākehā expect to be able to have access to any knowledge they decide they want, whereas for Māori they must be chosen to be given that knowledge by the elders,

Because of the way Maori society was structured, because of its unique world view, and because of its strong oral tradition, knowledge itself was never held to be universally available. Maori society valued knowledge highly, to such an extent that certain types of knowledge were entrusted to only a few members of the *whanau*. Some knowledge was considered to be *tapu* and there were sanctions that ensured that it was protected, used appropriately, and transmitted with accuracy (Smith 1999: 172).

This has been the case with the loss of the use of traditional instruments because they were *tapu* and only chosen people were given the knowledge from one generation to the next. At the turn of the century with the decline in population due to fighting and influenza only a few of one generation needed to be wiped out to lose the tradition, and Christianity took its toll,

And of course the new God brought new sounds, too. A new voice liberated the Maori voice – open-throat singing. Suddenly the valleys were echoing with hallelujahs. They took to the voice of the new God with great glee.’ Traditionally, singing had been characterised by a closed-throat technique, which still has its place in *moteatea* and *manawawere*. ‘Closed-throat singing requires a certain amount of control. The ability to maintain composure was paramount no matter what the occasion.’ The song form which evolved from the two cultures meeting – the *waiata a ringa* or action song – had no formal

restrictions. 'It became a very popular means by which Maori people expressed themselves' (Shieff 2002: 142).

Māori Traditional Musical Instruments

There are many Māori musical instruments, the four main classes in a European classification system being: idiophones (percussion), aerophones (flutes, trumpets, whizzers), chordophones (stringed instruments) and membranophones (drums), the latter two not being common in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. My collaboration with Nunns would have involved choices being made from the following instruments:

The koauau, a 12-15cm open tube with three finger holes, capable of uniform scales¹². Often intricately carved and worn around the neck, koauau were traditionally made from human bone, whale tooth ivory, albatross bone or wood. Blown with the mouth they are used to accompany waiata singing, and should have the same notes as used in waiata. Koauau have a wide range of uses, each function with a different style of playing. Shieff reports, "You could play a koauau to make a baby and to stop a baby being made" (2002: 141).

Another form of flute is played with the nose and has a different aesthetic quality to that of the mouth flute. The mouth is used for philosophy and for eating and

¹² McLean gives evidence of uniform scales from research he conducted from different areas in Aotearoa New Zealand from ethnographic collections. 9 scales in 3 groups of 3 scales account for almost all the flutes in museums. McLean lists scale types and intervals in *Maori Music*: 195.

brings into play the tapu/noa dichotomy, using the nose bypasses this problem. Nose players are traditionally tohunga (leaders).

The koororohuu (whizzer) is worked like a top, being wound and unwound on strings to make a whizzing noise it was used to accompany songs in pao style. The puurorohuu (bullroarer) consists of a thin flat piece of wood (or pounamu) swung to produce a booming sound. "In Taranaki, according to Hamilton, bullroarers were called mamae and the whirling noise was used to dispense evil spirits at the lying in of a dead chief" (McLean 1996: 168). Also known as purerehua, "Ngati Porou used the purerehua to summon rain; in the south the same instrument is known as the hamumu ira garara, and was used to lure lizards out of their holes" (Shieff 2002: 141).

Trumpets include the flax, shell, and long wooden trumpet. The Teetere (flax trumpet) is made by winding harakeke (flax), and is often used by children as a toy, it could serve as a makeshift instrument to announce a travelling parties arrival at a marae. The puutaatara or puu moana (shell trumpet) is made from a Triton shell, and used as a signalling trumpet to announce visitors or to assemble people on a marae. It has a wooden piece fitted to one end, which is often elaborately carved, to increase the volume of the trumpet. The puukaaea is a long wooden trumpet, up to 2.5m, it was used as a war trumpet sounded by watchmen.

The Pahuu is a wooden gong consisting of a large slab of wood (often mataii) hung over a platform or watch tower high above the ground, "The consensus among the

several writers seems to be that slab-type pahuu were up to 30 feet [9 m] long and could be heard over distances of up to 12 miles [19 km]” (McLean 1996: 168). Often a signal to the pa of warlike hostilities. Tookere are like castanets, made of bone or wood, played as a pair, one in each hand. The pakuru is an instrument played while the musician also hums the tune. It consists of a thin piece of wood held between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand and the other end placed between the teeth and tapped with a smaller piece of wood held in the right hand. The Rooria is made of pliant supplejack, one end being held in the mouth and plucked with a finger. It was used to suggest words, the player making sounds and moving the lips, similar to the European Jew’s harp¹³.

Melbourne explained that the instruments have a life force, which involves the weaving of the spiritual and the material through the relationship between the player and the taonga (treasure),

The taonga puoro themselves also have a wairua or life force, which to a large extent dictates the shape of the relationship between player and taonga. ‘Everything has its own life force – animate and inanimate objects as well. You provide the breath that gives a voice to the taonga, but the music is a combination of the two’ ... The function of each instrument is determined by the category to which it belongs, and by the deity who rules its material. ‘They’re in the material, and in the process of making. They’re still there in the process of music-making, so when you perform you’re not only playing to people. You’re also playing to the deity, to the thing surrounding that particular instrument and its particular voice’ (Shieff 2002: 147).

¹³ See McLean.

Melbourne is articulating a pre-Christian belief system, with many gods that are present in the daily lives of Māori and where each performer is performing for the spectators but also for a deity and their ancestors. This places a personal responsibility upon the performer's shoulders to do their best.

Whilst I was waiting to proceed further with the traditional music I kept working in rehearsal with Andy Thompson, Mervyn's brother, who improvised on guitar and drum during movement improvisations with the actors, and who as musical director guided the actors in learning the songs of the play. During this formative period I was approached by an older male actor, who asked to be in the performance. As the Judge (Robin Bond) could not travel with us to perform in Hamilton, I invited this man to a rehearsal after which he commented that these 'land issues' had all been paid for and it was better to let them lie. I heard nothing more from him. However, shortly after, Dart telephoned irate, opposed to any Māori input into the text because it would make the text a mockery. He did not want Māori traditional instruments being played in the production and threatened to withdraw the music rights to the play. I reminded him that we had already spoken about the changes I wished to make which included the use of Māori traditional instruments. However, Dart was opposed to any changes to the musical score, as it was perfect the way it was because the way it was reflected the meaning of the text. This stance appears to be in opposition to the 'Notes To The Music' of the script which advise, "1. This is a basic performance edition

which leaves future performers plenty of scope to extend the instrumental work and vary interpretations.” This appears to leave room for at least a choice of instruments, but is undercut by, “2. Any doubts about performance intentions may be resolved by listening to the recording of the play released by Kiwi Pacific Records.” Note number 2 implies that the score should sound the same as the original performance on the recording.

When confronted by the irate composer, I agreed to his demands, but created a semiotic response utilising visual symbolic elements in the staging. At this point I read the piano as an instrument of colonisation that was silencing another Māori voice. I chose to put the piano on stage, silenced, as a representation of oppression, it came to stand symbolically for the dock in the courtroom and the prisons in Otago and Lyttelton, where Māori prisoners were held captive without trial for up to two years. The symbol of Victorian high culture, the piano thus became a visible link between cultural hegemony and military and legal power. Above the piano was hung a koauau, lit by a spotlight as an ‘authentic’ museum piece, an archival treasure to be inspected as object but not played, silenced. This treatment of the musical instruments as objects and part of the set, corresponded to Artaud’s call for ‘a concrete idea of music’. The predominant musical instrument that was played was the guitar. As one of the actors, well indoctrinated in Māori stereotypes, said in rehearsal, “it’s a traditional Māori instrument isn’t it?”

Collaboration with Andy Thompson – Musical Director

The same day that I first read the text of *Songs to the Judges* I made contact with Andy Thompson¹⁴ to ask him to collaborate on the performance. With nothing more than the script in one hand and bubbling enthusiasm to support my offer, he accepted unconditionally. He stood by the production through thick and thin and when no funding was granted remained ‘on board’ without payment. The musical score was written for piano and Andy transposed this to chords for the guitar, working different chord progressions and improvisations around the melodies of the original score. The music of the performance retained the base musical score of Dart, but Andy created a different sound from the original piano recording. Many of the songs were slowed rhythmically, and in some instances the musical instrument was removed utilising only the voices of the actors. A drum was added and also drumming on the body of the guitar for rhythmic effects.

and there are songs in *Judges* ... which have all the steely humour, intensity and toughness of Brecht and Weill. What they don’t find is a musical equivalent for the cultural dislocations which the play exposes. The incorporation of traditional waiata and haka provides one form of musical opposition, but there is no sign of the aggressive musical styles favoured by young urban Maoris [Bob Marley, reggae.] (Neil: 1979).

This statement by Neil is true of the printed score, but with Andy Thompson as musical director the dynamics of the music changed. In *Three Times More Likely* the

¹⁴ Mervyn Thompson’s younger brother, who knew the play from the original. Composer, singer, musician committed to ecological themes, and who had worked with the Free Theatre in Christchurch over many years.

Māori actors sang without musical accompaniment, stamping their feet rhythmically to the yelling of their voices, bringing their aggression through their music to the work, however, I did not draw consciously on reggae or hip hop.

Haka

One of the songs in *Songs to the Judges* is a haka, the generic name for all Māori dance. Most haka today are performed without weapons (haka taparahi), “No Maori ceremony is complete without haka. It is as fundamental to our rites of passage as the language” (Karetu 1993: 13). According to Māori mythology, “The first kapa haka (haka troupe) of Maoridom is said to be the women of Tinirau whose principle function was to find and destroy Kae who had slain and eaten Tutunui, the tame whale of Tinirau” (Karetu 1993: 15).

What is haka? “Haka is a composition played with the instrument of the human body, including hands, voice, tongue, eyes, face, feet, legs, emotional and disciplined it conveys messages of welcome, defiance and all aspects of Maori life” (Karetu 1993: 25). Haka are shouted, in a slower tempo to other forms of song, with a compound divisive metre (cc McLean). In the 1930s the Māori performing arts were almost lost, but a saving grace was Princess Te Puea Herangi of Waikato who introduced classes to teach young people traditional performance plus action songs, from which kapa haka groups developed, and “Today kapa haka has grown in strength and a festival with over

50,000 spectators is held every two years, along with tribal festivals. It has also ensured that these taonga will not be lost”¹⁵ (Kouka 1999: 11).

The haka called for in the script of *Songs to the Judges* is *Ka mate, Ka mate* - Te Rauparaha’s ngeri, that is, a short haka with no set movements, usually performed without weapons. Te Rauparaha, the warrior-chief of Ngati Toa, composed and performed this most famous of haka when he was in a life/death situation, “*Ka Mate* has since become the most performed, the most maligned, the most abused of all haka, Perhaps the team that has given *Ka Mate* its greatest exposure abroad and in Aotearoa, has been the All Blacks, (New Zealand’s rugby football team) who perform it before every fixture” (Karetu 1993: 68).

Ka mate! Ka mate!	Avaunt, O Death! Avaunt, O Death!
Ka ora! Ka ora!	Ah, ‘tis life! ‘tis life!
Tenei te tangata puhuruhuru	Behold!! There stands the hairy man
Nana nei te tiki nai	Who will cause the sun to shine!
I whakawhiti te ra!	
Upane! Upane!	One upward step! Another upward step!
Upane! Ka upane!	One last upward step, Then step forth!
Whiti te ra!	Into the Sun The Sun that shines!

Te Rauparaha was the invader and conqueror of the South Island (Te Wai Pounamu) and (in general) for Ngai Tahu, the Māori in the South Island, it is an insult to perform *Ka Mate* on their marae, a problem Thompson would not have faced in Auckland where *Songs to the Judges* premiered. However, this was an issue to be

¹⁵ The Aotearoa Maori Performing Arts Festival has raised the standard of Maori performing arts. It celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2002. It is competitive.

confronted when rehearsing *Songs to the Judges* at *Ngā Hau E Whā* (Ngai Tahu). One of the Māori actors brought up the issue and stated that he did not want to perform this haka in Te Wai Pounamu. So, an alternative was found by our Kaumatua, Rai Rakatau, who composed a new haka based on a line taken from contemporary protest marches, 'Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou, Ake Ake e e'¹⁶. He repeated this four times, alternating between women and men in a chant with haka movements. Rai composed the chant based on the principle of waiata style, that is by avoiding breaks for breathing, by placing the continued e e e (termed drag in English or hianga in Māori) at the end of the line permitted a voice to bridge the end of one line and the beginning of the next. With the four Māori actors singing as a chorus, and one covering the breaks for breathing, the performance of this chant was a powerful continuous vocalisation for the whole song.

An analysis of Thompson's casting of the songs in the text reveals that (in the majority of cases) the songs from the Pākehā perspective are sung solely by the Pākehā actors, whilst the songs from the Māori perspective (usually) involve all the actors singing in a chorus. The effect of this aurally is to give more time and volume to the Pākehā voices, and so dominate the soundscore. In my production I did not follow the casting suggestions, but separated the Māori voices from the Pākehā voices, in a move to equal the aural time for the indigenous voices, and in so doing created a strong

¹⁶ Struggle without end.

binary. This choice is a form of essentialism, as Spivak terms it ‘strategic essentialism’, where the proclamation of nationalism by colonised peoples is a strategy in reclaiming their identity. An example of this different treatment of voices follows in a dissection of *Ahi Kaa*, and comparison between the text and performance in 1980 and in 1998. Thompson cast five actors, the Judge, and two Māori and two Pākehā singers/actors. In his version of *Ahi Kaa* all the actors took part and no distinction was made between Māori and Pākehā. The first voices in order of being heard in the performance are: Māori, male, ‘Take taunaha! I discover the land!’; Pākehā, male, ‘Raupatu! I conquer the land!’, Pākehā, female, ‘Tuku! My ancestors bequeath the land!’; Māori, female, ‘Tuupuna! I receive the land as a gift!’ Then Māori and Pākehā sing together: ‘Ahi kaa, Ahi kaa, Ahi kaa!’ It was performed on a thrust stage with piano accompaniment in Gilbert and Sullivan tempo, the Māori and Pākehā voices united in the chorus in a hybrid beginning.

In the 1998 production the number of actors was doubled. *Ahi Kaa* was performed by the Māori actors on the marae atea, outside, in the dark of night. They were lit by fire poi¹⁷ and fire rākau with which they performed as they sang. There was no musical accompaniment, only the sound of voice, Te Mihinga using the sound form of the karanga, where the voice descends in a cry with a catch in the voice at the end of

¹⁷ Poi are small round balls swung on the end of strings, traditionally made of flax, in Māori performing arts. In contemporary performance there are versions constructed specially to be swung whilst burning. Fire rākau are wooden sticks with padding on each end that can be lit and performed with.

the call, for the first words¹⁸. The karanga is the call from the tangata whenua to the manuhiri to come onto the marae and is performed by women. The song finished with Te Mihinga calling a karanga to bring the audience inside the whare wānanga for the rest of the performance. The karanga, a sacred and integral part of the ritual of encounter, was not set, the person calling was usually Te Mihinga, but depending upon circumstances, for example, who was coming onto the marae, it could be Juanita, and it was open to the actors to use their own words, again in relation to the circumstances of each performance. Here the integrity of the cultural text was retained, as the karanga was used for its purpose of calling the guests into the whare. The use of the form of the karanga, a long drawn out wail between singing and reciting, for the first words of the play was taking this form out of its context and one of the things Te Mihinga and I worked on in rehearsal, as applying this form to these words was strange for her¹⁹. That it was used for the first words of the performance on the marae ātea validated this use for me, and our Kaumatua approved.

In the 1998 production the song 'Ten Guitars' was performed as a direct reference to globalisation and tourist performance, a parody of Māori performing arts for tourist consumption, and in this respect it was self-referential to the space, as *Ngā Hau E Whā* has commercialised Māori culture offering a 'Night of Māori Magic' to

¹⁸ See DVD documentary footage of rehearsals.

¹⁹ See DVD documentary footage for this rehearsal.

tourists, and in so doing ensuring the financial viability of the marae. For New Zealanders 'Ten Guitars' is the classic depiction of stereotypical Māori – 'they can all sing, dance and play guitar'. It is not a Māori waiata, but was performed as if it were an action song, along with the 'traditional musical instrument of Māori' (the guitar). To the pop song 'Ten Guitars' the Māori actors performed similar actions as they would in an 'action song' – the words and the actions becoming a counterpoint. The Pākehā actors played Japanese tourists, observing and clicking cameras – in another stereotype. This comedy was appreciated and read by Māori spectators, but lost on many of the Pākehā audience.

Halfway through 'Ten Guitars' there is a change in the rhythm and melody of the song, from being dynamic to slow and sentimental with the actors singing together words of sweet assimilation, "We danced together underneath the stars". I directed the actors to waltz together, Pākehā and Māori as couples, to the 4x4 beat, so that the 1,2,3 of the movement score undercut the words and music, the semiotics of the staging emphasising the dysfunctional assimilation of Māori into the dominant culture. After the opening night performance a spectator asked me why I did not have the actors foxtrotting, because at first she thought they just could not waltz. The dysfunction of the rhythm between the movement and the music through the juxtaposition of different art forms created a dialectical relationship between them, causing an alienation effect for the spectators, the cause of which was not always immediately obvious.

In directing *Songs to the Judges* I endeavoured to utilise the music and songs as resistance theatre, as Gilbert and Tompkins suggest, “if post-colonial theatre provides an occasion for a vocal expression of solidarity, resistance, or even presence, song can intensify the reactions of both the actors and the audience” (1996: 194). This songplay makes full use of songs to voice resistance and to express solidarity. Thompson’s *Matakite Land March* is an apt example of one such song that was taken directly from history (1975). This chant, in te reo Māori, acted to unite Māori in the audience with the actors staging the protest, where the music had a direct political agency against imperialism, the indigenous against the global.

Whilst the forms of the music carry the sounds, and almost automatic associations within a culture, for instance in English culture, Gilbert and Sullivan equals the parodic mocking of society, they also have subliminal associations that contribute in some way to the ideologies of the societies in which we live, to our beliefs and the way we make sense of the world. One such subliminal sound was the slow regular beat of the Scottish fife drum which was used in an aural montage across two songs, ‘We Got it All Together Just for You’ and ‘Gather up the Earth’. This was a sound I remembered strongly from Parihaka in 1994 and was an instance when Māori had appropriated non-Māori music for their own purposes. Another distinctive sound from Parihaka that influenced me, but that was not used in the performance as it is specific to Parihaka, was the rhythm of a waiata poi. I did not know it then, but this

waiata was *Tangi a Taku ihu e Whakamakuru ana* (My Sorrow is Ended) “a song composed by Te Whetu to celebrate Te Whiti’s teachings ... Rapped out to the rhythmic slap of the double poi” (Scott 1975: 146-147).

Ko au pea e, te turia ki runga
He mahihi whare koe I
Miti Mai te Arero.

Now that I may stand with you
 Who are the bargeboard of our house
 Miti Mai te Arero.

The waiata, comprising five verses, was composed upon Te Whiti’s release from Lyttelton gaol and return to Parihaka in 1883 after two years absence, and is one of the most famous in Taranaki. McLean describes it as,

The tempo is rapid (224 quavers to the minute) and the slap of the double pois forms a consistent ‘off-beat’ accompaniment throughout the song. The melody is very simple (it has only three notes, all of which are within the range of a single tone) so that most of the musical interest is in the rhythms. Each repetition of the melody has two phrases, each with eight quaver beats. Unlike Western music which would organise this in a regular 4 + 4 throughout, ‘Tangi a Taku ihu’ often substitutes an additive grouping (usually 3 + 2 + 3) for the 4 + 4. And the rhythm is still further complicated by syncopations between phrases. These syncopations may also be considered to be additive groupings over a period of 16 quaver beats instead of 8. In other words, the rhythm of the words gets out of step with the rhythm of the poi balls and two bars are needed before they coincide again. Thus the song is really an example of cross-rhythm. The off-beat slap of the poi balls marks a regular 4/4 divisive metre throughout, and upon this is superimposed various additive metres, the most common of which is 3 + 2 + 3. This gives the music a quite extraordinary rhythmic vitality’ (Scott 1975: 147).

This quotation is included at full length as McLean clearly describes a different rhythmic form from that of a Western tradition, performed by women with poi (two soft round balls attached to string which can be long or short) a traditional instrument

of Māori culture. This different musical form raises the question, in a bicultural performance how do the different cultures represented in the audience understand or respond to music performed from another culture, McLean posits, “They may find the music agreeable, or not, but the subliminal qualities of the music that give meaning to the people of a culture are lost on the person from outside, unless they have become familiarised to it” (1975:7). In response to claims by missionaries about the sounds of indigenous peoples’ music being primitive or monotonous McLean argues that, “Music – whoever may have said otherwise – is not an international language. Some musics are more accessible to us than others because they happen to share elements of our own system ... Others are so different that they cannot be understood at all” (McLean 1975: 7). Can we achieve bi-musicality? McLean argues that people from another culture cannot differentiate between the sounds of a different culture’s music that has different structuring rules, and to overcome this one must internalise the rules of the music. This is difficult when the rules are not written but hidden in the minds of the singers.

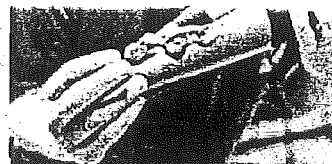
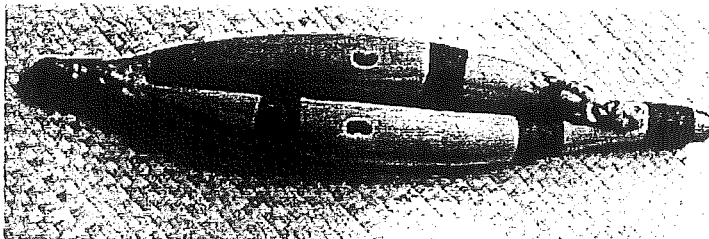
In the 1998 performance of *Songs to the Judges* what may not have been obvious to spectators was that contrary to the stereotype ‘they can all sing and dance’ the Māori actors were not trained singers or dancers, and were not necessarily proficient in kapa haka or other Māori performing arts. In some songs the musical presentation broke with the harmonic expectations of Pākehā spectators, with a Brechtian harshness and atonal quality. If the songplay was about resistance and

protest, then it could not not be performed because the actors were not experienced singers. Of course this necessitated an intense learning process for all the actors, where those who had experience and vocal training taught and worked with those who did not, and daily input from Andy Thompson as musical director. To be silenced once again because of Western aural expectations was not on.

I made decisions to keep separate the different cultural forms of performance. But there is hypocrisy lurking here, whilst the Pākehā actors did not participate in Māori traditional performance forms, the Māori actors were involved in the overall form of Gilbert and Sullivan because that was the Western theatrical form used to create the performance. This is the model of syncretic theatre, where indigenous peoples have turned to Western theatre forms as a method to assert tino rangatiratanga – self determination. Theatre Marae and Marae Theatre²⁰, as the names imply, embody this hybridity between Western theatrical form and Māori ritual and performance, where the indigenous frames and/or interrupts the global Western form in a meeting of the indigenous and global in one space and time.

Song is a way of conveying greeting from one realm to the other. Whakapapa is not just about identifying yourself as a beneficiary of a particular tribal authority. It's also about relating yourself to other beings sharing the same space. Birds and insects are seen as brothers and sisters through the same progenitor. Those are very important concepts to understand. They're not hierarchical links. They're lateral ones (Melbourne in Shieff 2002: 145).

²⁰ See chapter on Environmental Theatre for detail of Marae Theatre.

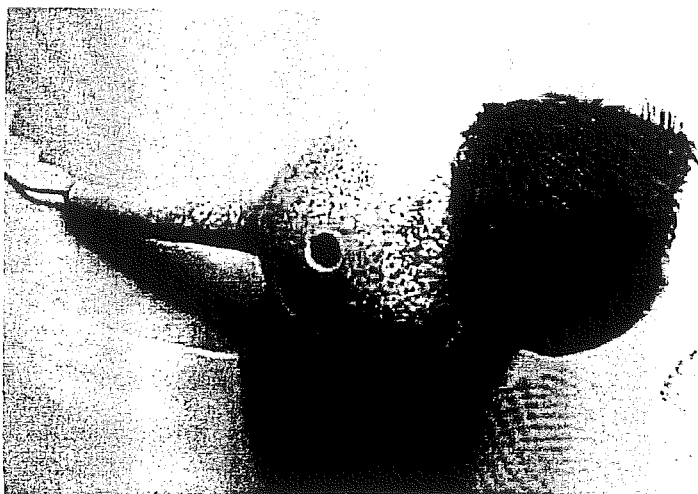


Putorino - both trumpet and flute

This is the less common double version. Putorino is unique in that it functions both as a trumpet (the kokiri o te tane / male voice) and as a flute (the waiata o te hā / female voice) and is also employed as a conduit for the voice when sung into. It is also unique in that it is the home of Hine Raukāturi, the Māori goddess of music.



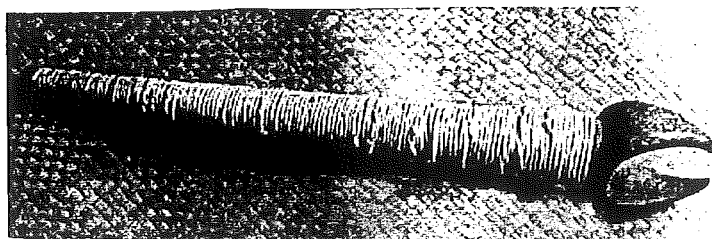
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Poiawhiowhio - whistling poi

It was used as a bird lure. It was made by hollowing a gourd, drilling holes on either side and attaching a cord by which it could be swung around the head creating a whistling, chattering voice that attracts birds.

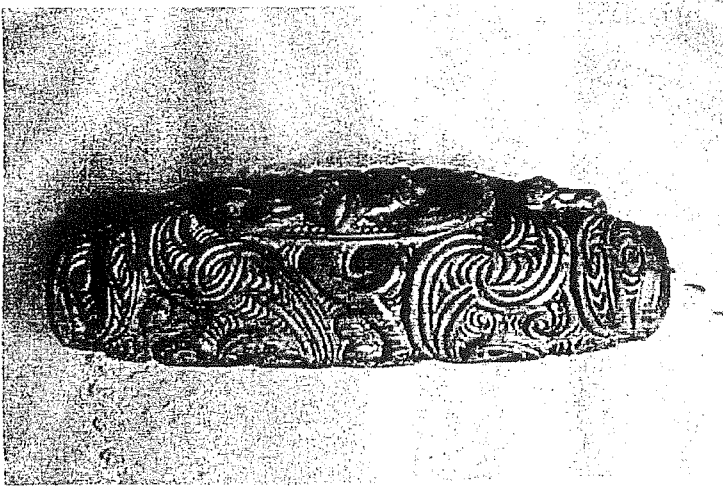
Roll cursor over picture to see a second view.



Pukaea - wooden trumpet

The picture at left shows a smaller example of the instrument. Pukaea were used to announce relay signals at times of conflict and were also used to announce the ripening associated with the planting of kumara (sweet potato) and other crops.

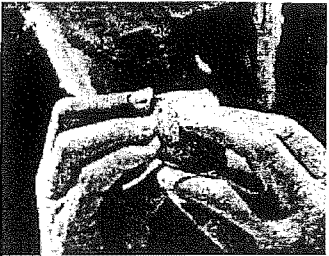
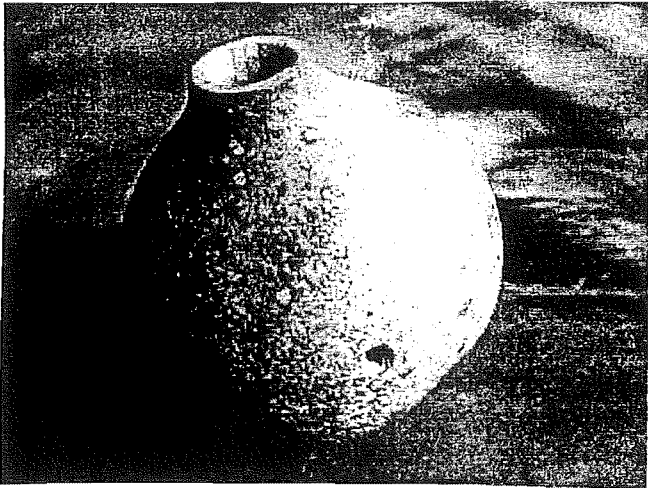
Richard Nunns - performer on traditional Maori musical instruments



Koauau - three-holed flute
This finely decorated example is made maire, a native hardwood

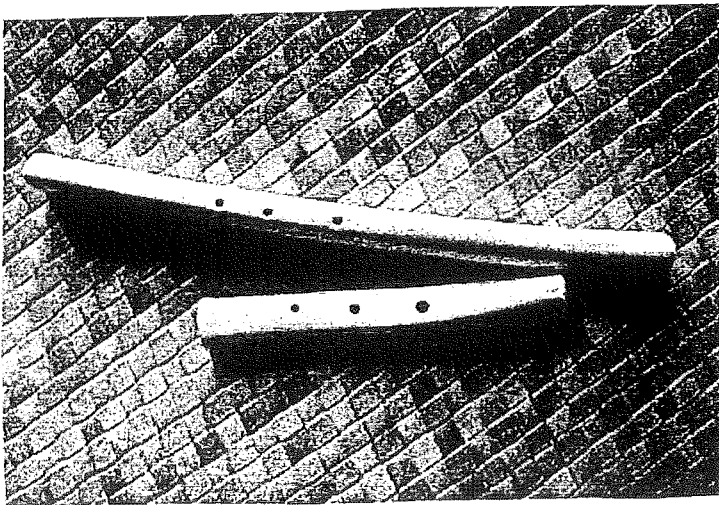
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**Koauau ponga ihu
nose flute**
This is globular flute played with the nose. It is made from the hue/gourd.

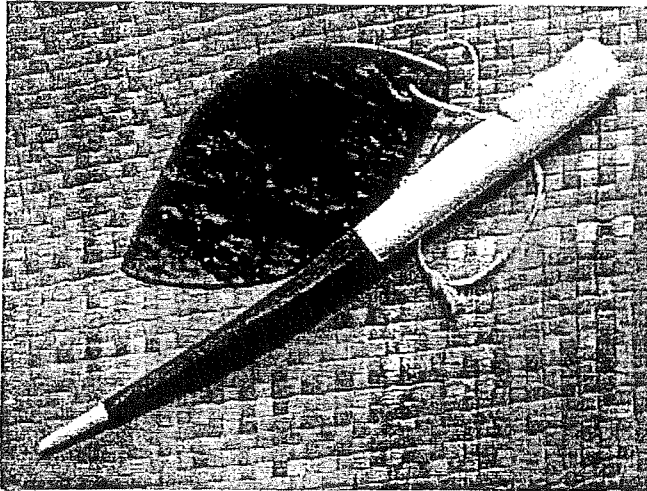
See a second view of the koauau played rolling your cursor over the picture above



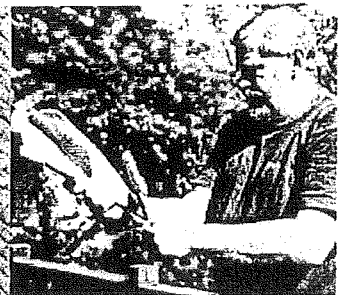
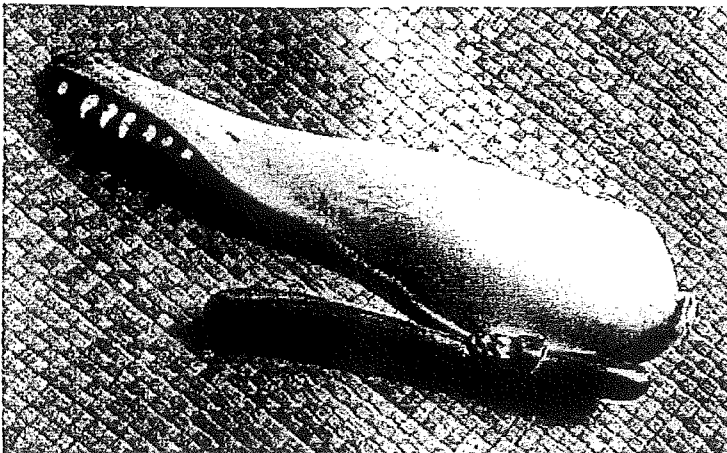
Koauau - end blown flute
The koauau commonly has 3 finger holes has a melodic range of four tones which corresponds to the melodic range of moteatea/traditional song.
The longer koauau is made from koiwi toroa/albatross wing-bone; the shorter made from koiwi kuru/dog bone.



Putatara
conch shell trumpet
These instruments had a variety of roles from signalling to ceremonial and ritual



Pahu pounamu
nephrite jade gong
The striker is made from whale bone. The pahu was used to alert people, to keep them awake when under siege, to signal and to punctuate ritual and ceremonial activity.



Tumutumu
found' percussion instrument
This was used in the whale purakau (t of learning). In the example at left the is the jaw of the upokohue (pilot whale the striker is made from akeake, a native hardwood.

CHAPTER VII

REHEARSAL: SONGS TO THE JUDGES 1998

I must concentrate on technical precision. I can only collaborate with those who know the art of self-discipline (Barba 1995: 48-49).

Discipline is a political anatomy of detail (Foucault 1995: 139).

Whilst interviewing Madeline McNamara about her bicultural work with *Magdalena Aotearoa*, I explained to her a little about my aspirations in directing a bicultural performance and the problems and resolutions encountered during the process of rehearsals for *Songs to the Judges*,

The work on *Songs to the Judges*, that ideal that I started off with, wanting to make a bicultural piece that had equality between the people involved on all levels, the music, the whatever it was that went into the performance, but how do you make that work? It's so easy to say that this is what we want, but my god! The interesting thing really was the process of the rehearsals, the interactions between the actors, between Māori and Pākehā, and how they had to deal with working together, and with this complex text about colonisation, which was so difficult, that was a part of their history. I mean the Pākehā's saying, "do we have to play the baddies all the time? It's not fair, we don't like it". That was the perception at the beginning of it. I rehearsed first with the Pākehā actors, as the Māori actors were not yet cast, and they could pretend, or role play, being Māori and belt each other up, or arrest each other, or lock each other up in prison, but the minute the Māori bodies were in the space would say, "I can't do that to this person" and in one improvisation a young Māori woman being chained, held down. Afterwards she said, "I looked up and there was all these white faces around me and I was afraid"¹. That fear between the races, and slowly over the months how that fear broke down, and how the jokes began and anyone coming into the room would have said, 'well that's not politically correct', or 'what racists', but the actors had developed such a rapport that the

¹ Juanita Hepi.

humour came back almost on an ironic level and they just threw these jokes out there, at each other, and the whole thing lifted. But it took a long time, probably four months, everyday to begin to get to that space where there was trust and a relationship. Really it was the work itself and the realisation that the value systems were totally different. How to cope with that and with each other's lives. Someone coming in and saying "I'm late" – an hour late and everyone was really pissed off – and I would tell them that they needed to explain why they were late to the group, and personal stories would come out, and advice offered, instead of everyone being really angry, the reversal of that, and support of each other in times of crisis. So the personal lives got integrated into the work. And that was wonderful. But its so different from writing, 'I want an equal working relationship' because you have got no idea what that really means, in the training, the work with the mo rākau², the giving, the teaching, so it's not an exploitation by either side, it's a sharing (2000).

What I was articulating to Madeline was based on my hypothesis at the beginning of the research for this dissertation, that 'my directing of *Songs to the Judges* is motivated by the desire to question how an intercultural performance can be negotiated in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1998. It stages histories that have been marginalised in our national mythologies. The dialectic is between acts of colonisation and acts of protest against that colonisation.' On reflection, I see the work and the performances as a barter situation,

The most obvious socio-political relevance of barter is its role as catalyst to the meeting of cultures. Barter is borders which, to paraphrase Homi Bhabha, mark the boundaries of cultural difference and provide the means for a dialogue between those differences. Barter is sites of cultural contact and negotiation predicated upon performance (Watson 2002: 105).

² Mo rākau, wooden stick, stick fighting, martial art.

The rehearsal process began with actor training and in this I was working purely from my readings of the texts of the masters, Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Brecht, Grotowski and Barba. What little I knew of actor training³ was from reading, and working myself with the described exercises with two colleagues training in the room, but with no living master. I had also participated in a workshop with Jill Greenhalgh (The Magdalena Project, Wales) training with sticks.

Philosophy of Training

At the beginning of the rehearsals I decided that the ‘actual’ training exercises were irrelevant, but that it was the discipline that the training instilled that was the key principle. I decided to base the training for this production on a military model because the play is about the conflict between Māori and Pākehā, the colonisers being the army and the police, men and women who have been trained in strict discipline, and who are physically strong and obedient, and Māori warriors, trained in the martial art form of taiaha, which involves the manipulation of a wooden stick. The training was as a group, marching together in rhythm, presenting arms to a very strict rhythm and pattern, turning, standing at ease, all in precise unison. This training was one way to achieve a very tight ensemble choreography of such a quality that is seen in dance more

³ This was before I went to the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) in 1998 and began to learn first hand from the actors of Odin Teatret and Asian masters principles of energy, weight and balance.

than theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand. The same group precision is also demanded in Māori performing arts.

During 1997 I approached Māori actors and performers throughout Aotearoa New Zealand in my endeavour to cast the songplay, with no success. With the hope of funding it was difficult, but when I had no funding it was impossible. Māori actors graduating from Toi Whakaari, The NZ Drama School are sought after and employed in full time work. Non-professional performers with kapa haka groups had problems with the script, either it was too political, and they had never participated in protests and did not want to be involved in a play that did, or not political enough, the problem being that it was neither written nor directed by a Māori. In October whilst meeting with Jim Moriarty he suggested he would bring his group to perform in February. I decided to work hard with the Pākehā actors so they were technically strong enough to meet with a long standing group, so the short rehearsal time could be utilised to the maximum. At the last moment due to other commitments, Jim did not come to work on the performance and the search for actors continued. This meant that the Māori actors came into a rehearsal process that was well underway, that they did not participate in the making of the performance from the beginning, and this put them at a disadvantage at the beginning. However, in the second rehearsal period, prior to travelling to Hamilton in June, the Māori actors contributed in the rehearsal process on an equal footing.

The preparation for rehearsals began on 12 December 1997 when I presented to the Pākehā actors my suggested approach to begin rehearsals the following month.

This involved them working over the Christmas holiday break to prepare themselves physically for the training by jogging and exercising, and mentally by reading and attending various ritual performances as research for the rehearsal process. It was suggested that the exercise programme consist of: running, marching, press ups, sit ups, star jumps, crawling on the ground under and over objects, and the actors were to develop a sign language with sounds to communicate to each other when to move forward, stop, fall down, all without speaking.

I suggested that we would work with the social rituals that the play utilised. Firstly, the Court Room as *Songs to the Judges* is set in a law court. The Court's protagonists are the judge, lawyers, jury, police and the accused. All except the accused dress in costumes of authority, the uniforms of the police, the black suit or gown and wig of the judge, the suits of the lawyers, with props of gavel and bible, and use the language of the law. I asked the actors questions about this ritual event, for instance, "have you ever been in a court room?" and suggested they go and visit the courts in Christchurch and observe the procedures, especially looking for the social gestures, how people move, talk, when they sit or stand, how they react in relation to the judge and the accused. There are different kinds of court, the family court, which is usually closed to the public, the criminal court, the high court. I asked the actors to

look for things, actions, speech, costumes, that they could bring to rehearsal from the procedures of the court. As preparation for rehearsal I too attended sessions of the court, observing the procedures: who was on trial, who was judging, how the prosecution proceeded, the lawyers attitudes, the language and the dress codes.

From my research it was clear there was a binary in operation in the court room, the delineation of class was evident, the difference in use of language, in dress codes, with white faced elegant lawyers and the (predominantly) white male judge, opposed to the defendants, the poor, less educated, (predominantly) Māori on trial. Black bodies lined up, bodies con-fined, as the gap between rich and poor widens (and New Zealand has one of the fastest growing gaps between rich and poor in the OECD countries) what is anticipated will happen to the statistics in relation to bodies confined? *Songs to the Judges* is about these issues as it interrogates the law, and one of my aims in its production was to show that the law is a construction.

The Church was another institution of investigation. I asked if the actors had ever been to a Catholic mass, suggesting they go and see the ritual, noting the costumes and props, for example, the incense, candles, bells, the Eucharist, the body on the cross. In relation to 'Till You Came Along' the symbolic eating of the body of Christ and the drinking of his blood, is not so dissimilar to the rituals of cannibalism. Christians symbolically partake of Christ's body and blood to imbue themselves with his mana

(power or spirit) as was the purpose for Māori in eating the flesh of the chiefs of their adversaries who were killed.

Extending from the institution of the church, the actors were to think about the role of missionaries in the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand. On a time scale missionaries arrived after the whalers and before the settlers, instructing and converting Māori to Christianity, to make peace not war. This was an important colonising strategy so that the indigenous people could all the more easily be overcome by the British colonialists, who were good Christians who used force.

The army and police were other institutions I asked the actors to research. I asked if anyone had been in the territorials or experienced army training, as part of the training for the performance was to undertake military training and to understand the particular language of the military, for example the commands, 'attention', 'at ease', 'present arms'. The actors were also asked to bring to the first rehearsal one Meyerhold or Grotowski exercise that they should then teach to the other actors, for example: leap to the chest; climb onto another person's shoulders; walk as if you are in a swamp; a voice exercise or waiata (song); and a trust game. The actors were also asked to question their knowledge about the different scenes in the play, to read books and collect articles from newspapers. Suggested readings were: *The People and the*

*Land, Te tangata me Te Whenua, An Illustrated History of New Zealand*⁴, *The New Zealand Wars – and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*⁵ and *Ask that Mountain*⁶.

The physical investigation of these rituals of our society was chosen as a way to work on this play as all were closely related to institutions which exercise power and authority in society, and which demand strict discipline from their participants in various forms. My theoretical underpinning for this practical exploration was informed by Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* together with Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia⁷.

Foucault was a strong influence on the creation of the performance, looking at the inscribing power of the law, where the native body is inscribable, hence transformable. Legal inscription, confinement, rehabilitation, education. Discipline to break the body, to rearrange the body. Mindless obedience. We approached the problem of the Pākehā actors playing the role of colonisers through military discipline, as mindless obedience. We worked on what discipline does, you obey or you are punished, mindless punishment that is not productive, but useless work, for example, to be ordered to clean the yard with a toothbrush.

Why Foucault? Because what he is theorizing in *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, from the seventeenth century in France, is the disciplining of bodies

⁴ Judith Binney, Judith Bassett & Erik Olssen, 1990.

⁵ James Belich, 1986.

⁶ Dick Scott, 1975.

in the military, in the education system, and in the work place, through physical exercise, by time-tabling, by the control of an individual's time broken down into smaller and smaller segments. These methodologies were utilised in the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand through the enforcement of a British school education for Māori children, and methods of socialisation to create docile bodies in the population without resort to overt violence. The break down of the school day into specific periods of time to be spent occupied with specific subjects, and within these subjects the breaking down of instructions, of for instance, how to write: where the whole body had to be placed in the correct position to handwrite from the toes to the head, the angle the body was placed to the desk, etcetera. Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. "The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination" (Foucault 1995: 170).

Training

The theoretical underpinning for the military training of the actors came from Michel Foucault's *Discipline & Punish* because I was interested in the power relationships that came into play in colonisation, and how his research of discipline and

⁷ Bakhtin, MM. The Dialogic Imagination.

punishment for prisoners extended into all realms of society, to a point where people eventually discipline themselves to be complying citizens. Whilst the Pākehā actors represented British colonial power; but on another level, by being physically enacted, these very dynamics of power became a part of the rehearsal process itself.

It was at this point that I could see in action Foucault's analysis of the socialisation of military training, that it could be utilised not only for the physical training of the body, but for its psychological effects, the sheer obedience and non-thinking adherence to commands. I worked with the actors on their obeying an officer's orders, immediately and without asking questions. They even got to the point where they would self impose punishment of push-ups if they did something they thought was not as it should be. I might look across the room and there would be an actor doing push-ups. We discovered how this blind obedience to discipline functions and that fed into the rehearsal process, that when playing a soldier the actors would just do what they were commanded to do, and not question the command because it is an instantaneous response, mind and body are one, the command is given and the action done. There is no time delay between the command and its execution, "the disciplined soldier 'begins to obey whatever he is ordered to do; his obedience is prompt and blind; an appearance of indocility, the least delay would be a crime'" (Foucault 1995: 166).

The actors worked with military training, each taking turns to play being an officer and shouting at a soldier in his face, yelling at him, giving commands, stupid

idiotic commands that the soldier must obey. This slowly broke down resistance in the actor, who learnt to do what was asked, immediately, not to question but act on it, scrub the floor, stand at attention, run on the spot, etcetera. This then fed into their roles, where they no longer questioned the validity of what they were doing, but just moved quickly and quietly to enact what was required. In his chapter 'Docile Bodies' Foucault discusses the soldier as a machine that can be made, a body that bears certain signs,

The signs for recognizing those most suited to this profession are a lively, alert manner, an erect head, a taut stomach, broad shoulders, long arms, strong fingers, a small belly, thick thighs, slender legs and dry feet, because a man of such a figure could not fail to be agile and strong ... the soldier 'will have to march in step in order to have as much grace and gravity as possible ... The body of the recruit is gradually adjusted so that he has a straight posture, holds his head up high, looks straight ahead, masters his body and is ready at all times, becoming a creature of habit ... to the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases its forces ... Lastly, there is the modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement (Foucault 1995: 135-37).

Foucault calls this mastery of the body, the discipline of military training, 'political anatomy'. The human body as a political anatomy, that has a relation of power over it, so that it can be used as the controlling person(s) chooses. He concludes that "discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile bodies'" (138). He argues that discipline increases the forces of the body, in that it can be utilised more fully and is stronger, but that this increased power is dissociated from the owner of the

body in that the body becomes more obedient to an outside force, “If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination” (138). As director I did not plan the use of military training to coerce the actors into playing roles they found distasteful, but was aware that its implementation (for the purpose of the development of the characters) had a manipulative effect on the actors as well.

Foucault maintains that in the 20th century we are all socialised by this political anatomy, in schools, in hospitals, in prisons and in the army. The institutions of society are disciplinary, monitoring, ranking, timetabling and disciplining and these base techniques of discipline spread from one institution to another and are grounded in the body,

Although those who concern themselves with details are regarded as folk of limited intelligence, it seems to me that this part is essential, because it is the foundation, and it is impossible to erect any building or establish any method without understanding its principles. It is not enough to have a liking for architecture. One must also know stone-cutting (Foucault: 139).

It is not enough to have a liking for theatre. One must also know the principles underlying performance, principles of energy, balance, opposition and how to build or establish a method of actor training. In my work, before studying with Odin Teatret, a major influence for me (as he was for Thompson) was Bertolt Brecht, who concentrated on detail, often working for hours with his actors on small daily gestures

and details where the mystery of the everyday was explored, and made strange, where the everyday detail was held up for interrogation, to be analysed and not taken for granted as 'natural', as all of life is socially constructed.

An exploration of discipline, leads into an interrogation of the training methods of theatre. I was following the working methods of Grotowski where strict discipline is important in the training of the actors and found the relationship of this with Foucault's research interesting, "The *time-table* is an old inheritance. The strict model was no doubt suggested by the monastic communities. It soon spread. Its three great methods – establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition – were soon to be found in schools, workshops and hospitals" (Foucault: 149).

Whilst I was observing the training of *Vindenes Bro*⁸ in Ryde in 1998 Iben Nagel Rasmussen (actor with Odin Teatret since 1976) explained to me that the strict adherence to an established rhythm in the training was most important as it freed the mind from wondering about what the body might be doing next, it knew what the routine was, and this enabled a close interaction between mind and body, where they became one. This rhythm involves repetition, the same exercises repeated daily over time, in an established rhythm, "For centuries, the religious orders had been masters of

⁸ *Vindenes Bro* is the international group, comprised of twelve performers who travel from many countries, to train with Iben Nagel Rasmussen in Denmark, for one month each year. The training focuses on work with different energies: resistance, balance, vocal training, and includes work on a performance piece. See *Il Ponte dei Venti*, Un'esperienza di pedagogia teatrale con iben Nagel Rasmussen, 2001.

discipline: they were the specialists of time, the great technicians of rhythm and regular activities” (Foucault: 150).

Grotowski talked of the holy actor, and his writings had a religious overtone involving a monastic quality of self sacrifice, solitude in the work, and strict adherence to time. At Odin Teatret the door is closed at the start of rehearsal, training, or of a performance. If one is not on time one is not permitted entrance into the room. Apart from the training of discipline, this rule establishes a respect for the work of the actor and for one’s fellow actors.

Foucault analyses how a group of soldiers is taught to march in unison, that they march to the beat of a drum, and to do this in time they must all begin at the same time with the same foot. The actors in *Songs to the Judges* were taught the intricacies of marching and presenting arms by an army cadet. This was excellent training for ensemble work where they gained the precision of dancers moving in time and space. The French army ordinance of 1766 (*Ordonnance du 1 janvier 1766, pour regler l’exercice de l’infanterie*) went further than time-tabling, it described in detail the enactment by the body of the gesture of marching, “The ordinary step will be executed forwards, holding the head up high and the body erect, holding oneself in balance successively on a single leg” (51). As Foucault points out,

What the ordinance of 1766 defines is not a time-table – the general framework for an activity; it is rather a collective and obligatory rhythm, imposed from the outside; it is a ‘programme’; it assures the elaboration

of the act itself; it controls its development and its stages from the inside ... The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power (152).

Discipline defines each of the relations that the body must have with the object that it manipulates. Between them, it outlines a meticulous meshing. 'Bring the weapon forward. In three stages. Raise the rifle with the right hand, bringing it close to the body so as to hold it perpendicular with the right knee, the end of the barrel at eye level, grasping it by striking it with the right hand, the arm held close to the body at waist height. At the second stage, bring the rifle in front of you with the left hand, the barrel in the middle between the two eyes, vertical, the right hand grasping it at the small of the butt, the arm outstretched, the trigger-guard resting on the first finger, the left hand at the height of the notch, the thumb lying along the barrel against the moulding (Foucault 1995: 153).

The actors also worked with these detailed instructions which place the body and an object in relationship, constituting a 'body-weapon, body-tool, body-machine' complex. This training corresponds to Māori taiaha training with an object, and with the physical actor training led by Tage Larsen of Odin Teatret, where movement is broken down into elements. Each day the actors all participated in army training both indoors and outdoors, marching, turning, presenting arms. They worked with wooden sticks 1 metre in length which represented their rifles and taiaha. Initially led by an army cadet, the actors then took turns in leading the training and giving the commands. The mo rākau training was led by Potaua and Miff while our kaumatua observed and gave advice on the form.

My Influences in Directing *Songs to the Judges*

As director I was working from different specific theatre theorist's perspectives or influences. One of these was Grotowski and his method of physical and vocal training for the actor. When Brook invited Grotowski to work with The Royal Shakespeare Company he noted that Grotowski's work gave each actor a series of shocks: of confronting himself with irrefutable challenges; of catching sight of his own evasions; of sensing something of his own vast untapped resources; of being forced to question why he is an actor at all; of finding he wants to confront these questions and of seeing that acting is an art of absolute dedication, monastic and total. Grotowski believed that, 'A way of life is a way to life' that the work must be a challenge, daily, with intensity, honesty and precision. He sought to ripen the actor by stripping down, not adding masks, of laying bare, so that the actor gave him/herself in performance in an almost trance like experience. His working method involved not teaching the actor tricks, but taking from the actor their daily masks, roles and gestures, "The main point then is that an actor should not try to acquire any kind of recipe or build up a 'box of tricks' (1968: 262). His work was through the *via negativa*, not a collection of skills, but an eradication of blocks. The work of the actor was not taught by an expert as in a conservatory, but the actors taught each other skills or exercises that they had learnt, usually from a master in the particular form, for example Cieslak. At Odin Teatret (where Eugenio Barba, who observed Grotowski for three years, is the director) this

training developed into individualised training where each actor found their own rhythms and blocks, in the exercise, to work through and with. When an exercise became easily accomplished the actor was to begin on a different and difficult exercise and work through that and so on. In this work the challenge is a personal one and not competitive, with help from one's colleagues in the sharing of knowledge and technique.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals for *Songs to the Judges* began with improvisations. In the beginning the Pākehā actors were asked to improvise around a particular song or scene, for instance, 'Payment' where everyone had been reading about the history of colonisation and began to improvise with rusty chains, one metre long wooden sticks and grey army blankets. The actors were left alone in the space while I observed from above on a mezzanine floor, writing down their movements, or scores of movement. The movement scores were then written on cards and pinned to the walls so that the actors could remember and repeat them, and so the improvisations were not lost. The actors were a little confused by not being given specific themes to improvise around, only the wide general themes of each scene. At each session they were left for two or three hours to work and explore. One of the less experienced actors who had not worked with improvisation before, found that when he had moments of not knowing what to do, he reverted to the marching from the military training, sessions. This discipline of

movement gave the Pākehā actors an extra-daily technique that they fell into when they were not representing a particular character. This was most interesting to observe, as it meant that he always had a structure to fall back on, and that leant meaning to the improvisation in process, as he ‘became’ a soldier whilst doing it and sometimes it was this soldier that then fed into a new improvisation or into an existing one that the other actors were working on. The openness of the improvisations and the length of free time, where they fell into and out of specific actions, led to a depth of meaning adding layers to the performance text.

Space

The first few weeks of rehearsals were held in the Arts Centre in Christchurch, a stone building which once housed the University of Canterbury. This space was very familiar to most of the Pākehā actors as it was where they had trained during their Theatre Studies degree. However, when the Māori actors joined us, they felt intimidated by the space, out of place and very uncomfortable. The space in which we worked proved to be one of the important determining factors affecting equity in the working relationship between the actors. As soon as we moved the rehearsals to *Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae* this spatial power dynamic altered. On the marae the Māori actors were at home⁹, whilst the Pākehā actors were definitely uncomfortable,

⁹ Juanita’s uncle had helped to build the whare wānanga in which we were working.

not knowing the protocols of behaviour, for example, that they must not eat or drink inside the whare wānanga.

Kaumatua / Cultural Adviser

Rai Rakatau joined the rehearsal process as kaumatua approximately half way through the work. Our relationship was easy, we attended rehearsals together and he stayed at my house while he was in Christchurch. I had a vision for the performance, an overall plan, a rhythmic seismic wave, whilst Rai worked with the Māori elements within the production. He worked with Brent on whai kōrero¹⁰, and with Potaua on taiaha (long club). He worked with all the actors on singing for as long as possible on one breath, of trying to sing a whole verse of text in one breath. Melodic continuity is a basic principle of Māori waiata, achieved by avoiding breaks for breathing and is a reason why solo singing in Māori tradition is not popular. He also spoke for us at official gatherings on the marae and at the conference in Hamilton he was sought after by participants, especially those from Australia, who had thought Aotearoa New Zealand had perfect race relations, and were excited to discover that it was not only Australia that badly treated the 'natives'. Whilst we worked together without friction, it took some time before the Māori actors fully accepted that he could come in and tell them what to do. Initially they respected him as kaumatua but with a grudge. It was

¹⁰ See DVD documentary footage for detail.

not until they had time to develop a working relationship together and respect was earned on both sides that there was genuine goodwill between him and them.

By collaborating with a kaumatua I was working with one of the tenants suggested for Kaupapa Māori Research, however over and above this Smith notes that there are, “some culturally specific ideas which are part of what is referred to as Kaupapa Maori practices. These are not prescribed in codes of conduct for researchers, but tend to be prescribed for Māori researchers in cultural terms:

- 1 Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people).
- 2 Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face).
- 3 Titoro, whakarongo ... korero (look, listen ... speak).
- 4 Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous).
- 5 Kia tupato (be cautious).
- 6 Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the *mana* of people).
- 7 kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge)” (1999: 120).

As I worked with Rai in rehearsal and in negotiating the use of the space with the marae elders, I discovered how to proceed in terms of the above cultural dynamics.

Working alongside Rai I learnt to titoro, whatarongo, kōrero: to look, listen and only then speak, which was perhaps the most important lesson of all.

Rehearsals

One thing the actors struggled with was Thompson's use of generic names for characters, as they often did not feel that they had a specific character, in the naturalistic sense, that they could identify with; could create a back story for; could

find a through line of action for, for the whole play; as each song was a unit in itself and the actors played many different roles or characters. At one rehearsal the Pākehā actors were trying to be soldiers hunting down the Māori and they did not feel that they could do it. I suggested to them that they were young, 18 years old, in the army, in a foreign land, dumped in bush or a swamp up to their knees, muddy, cold and wet, and there were guns being fired at them. What did they do? Did they philosophise on whether this was moral or proper? Or did they fire back to save themselves? The answer became easy then. What the actors had to do was to use their imagination, to find their specific character, their individual justification for the action, in time and space, within the generic names – just as one does in a ‘naturalistic’ piece. Whilst they were representing all Pākehā or all Māori (which a Māori would never do) in terms of the script, the only way to come to grips with the roles was to find a character, to find the specifics within the work, as in Grotowski’s training where: if one imagines a cat it is not a general cat, but a specific cat, with a particular colour, type of fur, name and voice. The actor must imagine specifically, not in general. My approach to helping the struggling actors was different from Thompson’s who advised, “The best way to approach the choral characters is to think of them (a) as socially committed storytellers” (1990: 8).

The improvisations were fuelled by the text, by images, and by the extensive historical reading the actors were doing. When they began rehearsing their knowledge

about the history of Aotearoa New Zealand was slight, and they would come into rehearsals excited with new readings wanting to share the new knowledge with everyone, and then they had the opportunity to 'play' out the scenarios they had been reading about. It was a journey of discovery for us all,

The blankets will wear out,
 Rusted adzes will not mend.
 Your leather belts will perish,
 Your pots be full of holes,
 The payment that you make me
 Comes back to you in souls.
 The payment that you make me
 Will soon go up in smoke,
 A tobacco scrawl in the sky
 Writes out the joke (‘Payment’).

This song deals with the objects bartered for land. The song began with Stassa humming and inviting Potaua to dance. When he joined her she endeavoured to colonise him through the cultural form of the waltz, but he resisted determinedly keeping his haka step, which became a battle for dominance of the dance form itself. Whilst they were thus engaged, Stassa began to sing and each of the four couples began their own movement scores, polymorphic movement across the whole space, so that as a spectator one could choose to watch one couple throughout the whole song, or could watch moments of all of the action, but not see everything at one time. Each couple was acting out their own story or imagined reality for this song, which included acts of teaching, barter, enticement, and various relationships of power. The song did not end,

however, with Māori conquered, as movement wise the Māori actors became more and more angry throughout the song, and it became a bitter protest, when at the end of the song, they threw back the gifts they had bartered for land, physically pushing the Pākehā actors off the space, and onto the floor. Musically, the sound was to be like a tangi, with koauau, mimicing serious ritual, with vicious laughter in a Bakhtinian sense of carnival. Contradiction illuminates the hidden structure of signs, between gesture and voice, voice and word, word and thought, will and action, oppositions, for example one might say 'I love you' with a slap to the face¹¹.

At the start of rehearsals the politics of political correctness and biculturalism came to the fore. The Pākehā actors were able to make improvisations where they enacted violence towards each other. They could 'play' being the 'other', being Māori, in the battle scenarios of Parihaka, but when the Māori actors became part of the rehearsal process they could not easily enact violence upon Māori. They did not want to be seen negatively. One actor asked, "Do we have to be the baddies all the time?" Robin Bond, queried (or did not understand) the preciousness of the young actors in this respect. For him (a seasoned actor) to play a role whether 'good' or 'bad' was just part of being an actor, one 'plays' the role and 'acts'¹². For inexperienced actors, in my experience, there is often a difficulty where they themselves do not want to be

¹¹ This example is from a workshop by Roberta Carreri at ISTA in Germany in 2000.

¹² See DVD documentary footage accompanying dissertation for the group discussion around this point.

disliked, or they do not want their fellow actors to think that it is ‘them’ that is being unkind or brutal. In other words they have trouble separating being in character from being out of character, and in *Songs to the Judges*, this was more difficult because of the generic roles, where they had to find their own characters within the work as they were not written for them. For the Māori actors there was another issue, they were also representing their ancestors, so how did character work for them? When Rai Rakatau first came to rehearsal he sat in a corner of the room, his hat pulled down low over his eyes, pretending to be asleep. At the end of rehearsal he stood up and berated the Māori actors for not giving their all. He said things to them that I could never have said, that as Māori they represented their whanau, their iwi, and their ancestors. That they were doing a bad job, that they were letting down their people, and they had better shape up, “Being tribal is to own a history; to be located in a network of kinships; to inherit a mythology which includes a sense of place, a story of origin, possibly a waka; to acknowledge all this as your own culture, which in turn owns you” (Ritchie: 123). The issue of representation for Māori actors is difficult, mimesis is not featured in Māori performing arts, it is not done to speak for another person.

Rai Rakatau remembers the beginning

In 2000 I asked Rai Rakatau to answer interview questions in a written form, his response follows, it is the first instalment of a longer work, that due to being unwell he was unable to complete.

“I don’t have much money, I will be gone by morning. I will hitch down. The beginning of the hikoi and I had breakfast next morning – highway 27 at the crossroads.

She was on the verandah, she didn’t expect me so early. We have a straight talk over a cup of tea, strategy, control, the marae booking. Not enough time for rehearsals. I know how she feels, she feels let down, much talk about this tikanga, strategies. Action. We want a meeting at the marae tomorrow. Just tell them we are coming in, we want to kōrero, we want to talk, mihi to the Songs.

Meeting at the marae - we meet our whanau coming from the car park, surprise, “hello, hello, hello, what’s this, Tainui¹³ takeover? Haere mai! Come into the office, sit down, good to see you”. George [Kahi] opens with a mihi and apologises for the delay, caused by an extended meeting planning the memorial for the Māori battalion. Their concerns about the Songs and the public, about protocol, about tikanga. I want to take two days off if that’s ok And we will talk again later, ok? ... tena koutou. I close the meeting in prayer. As we leave the office, George follows and offers Lilicherie support, “Hey, you fellas, I will help you every way I can.” He kept his word and his mana. Thank you Bro.

If she had something to cry about then, she got something to cry about now, and I don’t envy her task.

Meeting on the marae. She talked about time being crucial, about needing everyone at rehearsals, and about people making commitments, cooperation and helping one another.

Need to postpone opening.

“Calling to attention, who the hang do you think you are? Ah? You want to be blimmin stars, want to be instant stars, pop stars - you want to be, without doing the hard jobs, without commitment, discipline, no such thing as something for nothing. You think you can make it just by walking on, forget it. I wouldn’t have you on my

¹³ George Kahi is from the Tainui iwi and Rai from Ngati Haua, both North Island tribes. George was working in a temporary position at Ngā Hau E Whā, a Ngai Tahu marae, in the South Island. As with any institution there were internal politics in operation at the marae, with George supporting Marae Theatre and the Ngai Tahu administration focusing on the tourist performances. *Songs to the Judges* was caught between these two power dynamics in relationship to the space in which we were working.

blimmin team – don’t like your blimmin attitude. Ok that’s it. I’m not the boss, she’s the boss.”

That shut them up! She didn’t know if she had a cast or not. Yep. They weren’t expecting that sort of talk. But I want to say this. They made it happen. They got stuck in, stuck in with a vengeance, that small core, that Māori group, man they came alive. They were creative, they adapted, they improvised. You know a little bit of this and a little bit of that, that little step, that posture, those hands, and their voices, wow! And they made the difference. Not only for themselves, but for us, for others, and for the Songs. Wow! They even made me chew my words. Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.”

As can be seen from Rai’s account, having a cultural advisor meant there was a force on the production team who could negotiate with the marae administration on their terms, and he could address the Māori actors in ways that were impossible for me. He drew on their mana, their pride, in cultural terms, and reminded them that they represented their ancestors.

Devising Through Improvisation

From the first day of rehearsal Andy Thompson was present during the actor’s improvisations accompanying their actions with musical improvisations. As well as the physical improvisations, each day there was voice and singing work during which time the nineteen songs of the performance were learnt. The music and the movement were developed separately, before we began to explore ways to link or layer them together. Two of the Pākehā actors had singing training and they worked with the others to develop the sound. A friend came in the early rehearsals to play piano as an aid in learning the songs. What had sounded to me from listening to the recording of the

original performance to be simple songs, proved to be quite complex musical arrangements, and two of the songs were very difficult for the actors to master.

The movement scores developed through the improvisations began from different starting points which included,

Making action from a written description, but in a non-illustrative manner, from associations, so the movement had no direct relation to the movement.

Actual copying from documentary film of action, for instance, the police and their use of batons to club down protesters at Bastion Point, and played with the text in an illustrative manner.

Based on the text, illustrative, but segments chosen by me and juxtaposed to those of other actors in often abstract or non-illustrative ways.

Action, scores with sticks, utilising Māori taiaha, haka, actions songs, movement from martial arts and army military movement.

Improvisation created from working with objects, for instance, tea cups, where text about tea, was put together with action using tea cups but in non realistic ways, for instance to play musical rhythms with the cup and spoon.

Rehearsal Log

28 January 1998 - I took into rehearsal rusty chains and mānuka¹⁴ sticks for the actors to improvise with, laying them at the edge of the space, leaving it up to them to choose if, when, or how they might utilise what they found during the improvisation. We worked with the idea of marching very fast towards the audience, getting very close,

¹⁴ Native tree of Aotearoa New Zealand.

and suddenly falling backwards into a shoulder stand which was held,¹⁵ to create a moment of shock for the spectators.

On this day we worked with the theme of Te Whiti's peaceful protest at Parihaka, where the central image was the plough. Improvisation was inspired from various written accounts including, Dansey's play *Te Raukura*,

The play is predominantly about the land. While soldiers burnt the Parihaka village, Te Whiti prayed, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us' and 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do' (38) ... Te Whiti gave his people the sign of three white feathers to wear 'Glory to God in the highest', the second feather means, 'On earth, peace', and the third feather means, 'Goodwill towards men' (47) ... Repudiating all violence he sent his men all over Taranaki, to plough and fence land as a token of ownership and to destroy the liquor the Pakeha traders brought ... Hundreds were arrested, and the jails at Auckland, Wellington, and Lyttelton were full, until the government was appalled at the cost of maintaining prisoners and policing the district. Maori prisoners were released from the jails, and more and more Maoris moved to Parihaka which became the largest Maori community in the country, and indeed a model community (1974: 49).

The actors made ploughs with their bodies, walking on their hands, feet in the air held by another actor and propelled along. Rusty chains were swung around one actors head as fighting implements; a teepee was made out of three sticks by tying them together to make a house or prison. Stassa worked on the repetition of the words, "Know the governor" in different rhythms, tempos, volumes, tones, until it developed into an imitation of Queen Elizabeth II, which was kept in the final production.

¹⁵ An exercise from Grotowski's *Poor Theatre*.

A different meaning was produced for Māori and Pākehā when one Pākehā actor staked out a claim for a piece of land. He laid sticks in a square representing a farm he owned, fenced, and sat proudly in the centre of this square. When the Māori actors interacted with this square on the floor, it became a prison, their traditional territory was bounded by the natural signs of rivers, mountains and trees, not fences. This improvisation with the sticks and what they might represent clearly illustrated the different values between the two races in relation to the land. No words were spoken, all was enacted in a language of the body, and the different responses were very clear, “Foucault suggests that one way discipline was distributed was through enclosure. This is the other side of exclusion in that the margins are enclosures: reserved lands are enclosures, schools enclose, but in order to enclose they also exclude, there is something on the outside. Discipline is also partitioned, individuals separated and space compartmentalized (Smith 1999: 68). Enclosure in terms of race may have different reactions for the people subjected to it, as seen in this rehearsal, where four sticks on the ground represent enclosure to a Pākehā which feels safe, in control, but to the Māori actor represented a prison, locked in, claustrophobic. From this, one must question how a prison sentence effects the psyche of people who are not used to fences, where divisions of land are tribal not individual?

“By his controlled use of gesture the actor transforms the floor into a sea, a table into a confessional, a piece of iron into an animate partner, etc.” (Grotowski

1968: 21). The actor's work in *Songs to the Judges* was to transform an object from representing one thing into representing another. This use of props is a feature of Barba's theatrical practice where a property should be used in many different ways. In *The Skeleton of the Whale*, for the duration of the performance, Tage Larsen moves from one end of the performance space to the other whilst endowing a piece of wood with many different qualities, interacting with this object as if it were a comb, a baby, a swing, with such focus that he is riveting to watch.

We worked with the idea of guerilla warfare, as opposed to structured warfare and researched the design of Māori pa defences, which were very advanced defence systems, later utilised by Europeans in trench design. Also explored were different genres of language and how they are vocalised, including those of an: auctioneer, racing commentator and military commander. Body research was undertaken in walking as German soldiers of World War II, in the goosestep, as part of the journey in finding a way to walk.

1 February 1998 - On this day the props taken into the workroom to experiment with were: water, bucket, beer bottles, sticks, blankets and a bible. The actors were left alone with the props, I sat above to note their actions. The actors began to play with the water¹⁶, to wet self, wet each other, which developed into baptising another, to

¹⁶ See DVD documentary footage accompanying dissertation for detail.

making a cross on a forehead, then to baptising by dunking the whole head into the bucket of water, washing feet with hair, all developing a biblical imagery. The improvisation became playful, flicking water over others or flicking over a place to sanctify it. This improvisation developed into missionaries baptising the natives and giving them blankets to wear to cover their nakedness. Song grew from the action: Psalm 23, *The Lord is My Shepherd* was sung. Believing this biblical message the Māori religious group Hau Hau would go into battle with no weapons, believing that if they had faith enough they were invincible, even against bullets. Myff sang the *Lords Prayer*, Stassa worked with a blanket, rocking her body in it fully covered as if she were going into a backward roll; making wings with the blanket.

Jonno mimed making a fire by rubbing two sticks together and sat beside it wrapped in a blanket. He then used the fire as a blacksmith to forge a sword and rifle dunking them in the water to cool.

Water was poured from one container into another from a height, creating interesting sound effects. A large roll of newsprint was rolled out along the space to create a road, another at right angles to it to create a cross, this was surrounded by the sticks to mark out land which was then patrolled to a drum beat.

Enactment of rape by soldier of Māori woman. Jonno wrapped his arms and legs around Stassa from behind and just held on, creating a very disturbing image. When she tried to escape he stopped her, Myff came in and put her hand over Stassa's mouth

so she could not cry out – another disturbing image. Then the couple were covered in blankets, held still, domesticated. This image was inspired from among others by *Te Raukura*,

TAMATANE: So we come to the fifth of November, 1881. In camp close to Parihaka, the forces of the settlers set off at dawn on the nation's last armed land grab. They were led by 'Honest' John Bryce, who had become Native Minister, and they came from Canterbury, Nelson, Marlborough, Wellington, the Wairarapa, and Taranaki ... The rape of Parihaka – a peaceful, and almost unarmed, defenceless village – was to be carried out not by British Imperial forces but by true New Zealanders, and the invasion plans were hurried up because the Governor was out of the country...

KOROHEKE: There were about 800 men at Parihaka – that is, men of fighting age. Old men and women numbered about a thousand, and there were about 700 children. That makes 2,500. The Pakehaa forces numbered about 2,500 armed men – so the odds were about even.

Te Whiti and Tohu are with their people on the marae at Parihaka. The people are seated.

None is armed. There is complete silence (50).

Juxtaposed to this, an actor read the creation myth from Genesis, "God said 'Let there be light' and divided the light from the dark". This was followed by the Māori creation myth which tells of the separation of Papa (earth mother) and Rangi (sky father) to create light.

Creation from improvisation in this sense gave the actors a free time to explore the ideas of the text, of their own interpretations of history, and to play with the props

that I as director had decided were the central images that were to be imaged in the production, for example, the grey army blankets and the sticks.

I recorded the improvisations on cards which were stuck onto the wall for the actors to see each day as their vocabulary of movement grew. The work was also filmed, but the footage was not available on a daily basis for the actors to refer to, but has been edited to make the DVD to accompany this dissertation. The improvisations were then repeated and changes directed in creating the dramaturgical montage over the period of the rehearsals. The initial improvisations were mainly conducted in silence, apart from solo repetitions of text or songs that came as a result of the work. The actors were not to create dialogue between themselves but could improvise alone, or in relation to another to create meaning. Improvisations were made around the text itself and also around historical moments, outside of the actual text, so the improvisations were not purely illustrations of the text.

I did not know it at the time, but this is a similar method to that of the Odin Teatret in creating material for productions where the actors each make material by way of improvisations that are shown to Barba, who directs the improvisation making changes to it and juxtaposing different segments of different actor's work in his montage. However, the initial improvisations are not usually made in relation to the final text, so have no direct illustrative, or mimed daily action, visible.

Ariane Mnouchkine and the *The Theatre du Soleil* also create work through improvisation. In 'Devising Through Improvisation: The Storming of the Bastille' details of improvisations for the making of 1789 are given. The first improvisations were based on a fairground style juxtaposed to a more realistic style, the actors exploring a multi-voiced retelling of the history. "The actors read the text of an account made by a clock-maker of how he spent 14 July 1789, the story is simple, precise and alive. They try to improvise, on the one hand drawing on previous improvisations, and on the other using this account: a storyteller begins to describe his day, then he is joined by others. Halt: general dissatisfaction" (Williams 1999: 33).

The actors are working with improvisations already developed, reading text and creating new improvisations from it, and juxtaposing the old and the new to find links and ways through the material generated from the improvisations to make the end performance. They worked for one month improvising around this one scene ...

In this work, Mnouchkine's actors first derived realistic scenes, then worked these more abstractly to find the essence of the event, looking for a simple signifier. Fables and dance were drawn on to add different tones and the actors worked in smaller groups on different improvisations. Again, another approach, the story was told as if to children, then repeated for adults but kept simple. Work then progressed to a political analysis of the causes of the 14th of July. Every stage in this lengthy and sometimes difficult progression was necessary to enable the constitutive elements of this event to emerge, and to discover a meaningful theatrical situation:

- the portrayal of the functioning of a political mechanism;
- the account by the people of their own victory;
- and the fairground celebration, which places all of these elements back into the context of theatrical performance and efficacy which constitute the life of the production (Williams 1999: 33-35).

I quote the above record of rehearsal from *The Theatre du Soleil* as it was an influence on my method in utilising improvisation as the main tool for creating the material for the performance of *Songs to the Judges*.

This manifestation of the term improvisation is not in the line of Keith Johnson, which is mainly based on a dialogue between two actors, with a narrative structure with a beginning, middle and end and where the actors create their own text using scenes from daily life in an illustrative manner which are not repeatable. The improvisations for *Songs to the Judges* were mute physical enactments of poems, or personal responses to poems or texts that could be either solo or in relation to another actor, which were recorded and repeated by the actors and which formed the 'material' for the performance over which the songs of the text were laid. The actors created a 'movement score' which was precisely repeatable and was then developed in relation to the music and songs of the playscript.

Obviously, the work was influenced by my understanding from reading Grotowski and his training methods; however, he did not advocate the use of the exercises in a performance, but I did use training exercises in the performance, with actors sitting on the shoulders of another actor, the use of sticks and military training.

I was also influenced by reading about the work process of Peter Brook.

Williams in *Peter Brook – A Theatrical Casebook*, documents rehearsals:

The Tragedy of Carmen : A Rehearsal Log” Michel Rostain notes that the international cast met on the first day for a collective warm-up and, “A rule is proposed: *do* first, try the exercise, discussion afterwards”. Gestures are copied from photographs and extended on before and after the pose. Work on the music and text begins flat, without intonations and meanings laid on before they are discovered through the work. And work is done on avoiding natural or stereotyped gestures in a search for the truth in action. Work on the physicality of the fight scenes, work on spoken dialogue first without external actions, and speaking without singing. “I am struck, sometimes confused, by how little we talk: to be more precise, in fact we do talk a great deal at certain times – but almost never *before* something. As little as possible before an improvisation, an exercise or scene: and it’s the same thing on the organizational level of the work ... Above all, the fact of approaching each scene in this way, with no prior discussion or justification, enables a natural life to emerge as the essential point of reference”. He [Brook] entrusts the task of deciding to the life of a performance when it is put into practice onstage: not to discussed ideas, in a vacuum (Williams: 1988: 346-7).

“Try it, don’t talk about it, let’s see if it works”, this was how I worked in *Songs to the Judges*. When working with a group who have not worked together before, I have found that the actors can be very resistant to this approach, needing to develop the trust to let the process of the work take over, and not to intellectualise too much before beginning to work, while the work remains imagined and not concrete it is static, complete and boring! As new things were discovered in Brook’s improvisations they were noted down and fixed for the next time, “The actors discuss their experiences of improvisation, pointing out that they never try to fix themselves onto an emotion, quite the opposite” (Williams, 1988: 345).

“Energy and the broken line: A Rehearsal Log by Jean-Pierre Vincent”.

Vincent was the assistant director for Brook’s *Timon of Athens* and recorded his

impressions of the early work. He talks of the importance of playing the 'relationships' written into the text. This idea of relationships is one of the most important in the philosophy of the Odin Teatret. "Theatre is about relationships", Torgeir Wethall insists during his work demonstration which I attended at ISTA in 1998. Relationships between everything, the actors, the actor and director, the actor and an object, the actor and the spectators.

My influences were from a line of tradition of Western based experimental theatre. This work is different from that of a codified form of performance, such as Noh, Balinese dance, Kathakali, or Māori haka or poi. These codified forms are (usually) learnt from when the performer is a young child and passed on by master to student, guru to apprentice, and often taught one on one, father to son, for example. The Western actor does not have a codified form but can create a movement score that is extremely precise and that can be put into performance beside dancers or juxtaposed to a codified form of performance and not be out of place. This is the work that is experimented with at the Odin Teatret and particularly through the meetings of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA).

What I was proposing in *Songs to the Judges*, was a juxtaposition of Māori and Western performance forms where the Māori performance forms were not modified, except by context, and would stand within the whole beside the Western forms. The Māori actors had some training in codified forms, and were at the same time able to

collaborate in the improvisations. They were required to learn the Gilbert and Sullivan songs, a Western form, but the Pākehā actors did not learn haka. They did however, work with mo rākau. An exchange occurred, with Pākehā learning Māori protocol and how to behave on the marae and Māori about theatre process. There were also daily cross-cultural exchanges within the work itself, where one actor would teach another a song, or a warm up exercise, for example.

Improvisation from Historical Readings

The actors working on *Songs to the Judges* became very interested, and often emotional, in reading books on the history of Aotearoa New Zealand. One that was of key importance was *Ask That Mountain* by Dick Scott which told the story of Parihaka, because six of the nineteen songs were based on the Parihaka story. This text was a base research source from which to begin our improvisations.

That fact that one third of the songs are based on the history of Parihaka is very interesting, locating Thompson's research in a specific hot spot of New Zealand history and one that continues to be subject to change in how it is perceived: from its destruction being celebrated in the 1890s, to a silence and embarrassment about the events in the 1950s and 60s during a period of government policy advocating assimilation of Māori into Pākehā culture, to a stance of decolonization where Parihaka

has taken on a mythic dimension and is remembered with pride by Māori as can be seen in various publications¹⁷.

Before too long we may grasp the fact that Te Whiti-o-Rongomai ... was also a figure of international significance. After all, his finely honed tactics anticipated those of Gandhi by half a century ... What happened in Taranaki was extremely unpleasant and even today makes disturbing reading. But good relations between people are not fostered by suppression. To imagine that nineteenth century Maori history ... can be expunged from national memory by not putting it down on paper is to echo the arrogance of settler-politicians from Bryce to Seddon ...

In Te Whiti's republic there was no inverted racism (Scott 1975: 7-8).

Improvisation

One improvisation was set in 1860 at the beginning of the New Zealand land wars when the *Niger*, British warship, shelled the mission station at Warea on the Taranaki coast. "The *Niger*'s heavy armaments included twelve 32-pounder broadside guns of the sort Nelson had used at Trafalgar and, spectacularly improved engine of death, a 68-pounder (5 tonne) cannon which snaked in recoil along brass slides. The bombardment continued for two days and nights but bush cover and the long range tempered its destruction" (Scott 1975: 11).

I asked the actors to imagine what it would be like to be bombed by a 5 tonne cannon, to think about the size of the shells, the explosions, of them overhead, in daylight and in darkness. This began the work which related to the 'reality' of

¹⁷ A radio documentary by Alwyn Owen; Harry Dansey's play *Te Rakura*; *The Parihaka Story* published in 1954; Michael King and Barry Barclay's TV documentary; Ralph Hotere's and Colin McCahon's paintings; and in 2000 an exhibition at the City Gallery in Wellington on Parihaka.

violence. To read the figures ‘32-pounder’ in a way distances what this means, as unless we have experienced it we do not know what that implies. The actors began to explore, reading and thinking about war, bombing and the destruction of homes and lives. Warea was undefended, punished by the British for having a policy of non-cooperation with British land buyers. The Taranaki Land League had made a pledge “*Te tangata to mua; te whenua to muri*, the man first, the land afterwards, Maori soil could be taken only over Maori bodies” (Scott 1975: 12). This pledge became part of the staunchness underpinning the actors work on *Songs to the Judges*.

Improvisation

General Chute, set out to prove that a regular officer could conduct bush warfare alongside any colonial ... Heading a mixed force of redcoats, rangers (under Von Tempsky) and Maori auxiliaries (under Major McDonnell) he left Wanganui on 30 December 1866 to hack, burn and butcher his way inland from the mountain to New Plymouth and back by the coast. Hauling artillery through the bush he marched 260 miles in less than six weeks, at one stage using his own horses for rations ... There were no prisoners made in these late engagements as General Chute ... does not care to encumber himself with such costly luxuries’ Said the Nelson *Examiner* (Scott 1975: 22-23).

The Pākehā actors were asked to play a scene creeping up on a pā¹⁸ site at night, not to speak but to pass messages silently, creating their own vocabulary which included imitating bird calls. The Māori actors began a similar exercise in defence of the pā from the other end of the whare, and the two sides met in the centre of the space. We worked intensely on actual fighting techniques in pairs, performed in blackout, the

actors could not see each other, and the spectators could not see the actors, all that was possible was to hear the sound effects: silence, and sudden moments of squirmish as the two sides engaged in a short combats, with sound effects from Andy on guitar. This scene was not one of the songs of the text, being inserted as a piece of pure action between 'Till You Came Along' and 'We Got it All Together Just for You'.

Work on Fight Sequences

Godfrey Sim, coordinator of the Circo Arts programme at the Polytechnic in Christchurch was invited to instruct the actors in fighting techniques. He worked with slow motion, boxing with space between the actors, how to hit defenceless people while playing the role of police with batons, rolls, falling and recovery, to stand on another's back, and to climb onto another's shoulders. I instructed the actors in stick throwing techniques as an exercise to gain focus and presence, to generate unity within the group, and as work with an object, as the sticks were used in the production in various ways. In the stick throwing exercise, actors can expect a stick to come from any direction, at any speed or height, so must be alert to the whole space and everyone in it being finely tuned to each other.

In this scene the actors were engaging in direct combat between Māori and Pākehā. The scene was worked later in the rehearsal period without problems arising from the Pākehā actors about enacting violence on Māori. The reasons for this were at

¹⁸A pā is a stockaded village.

least twofold: the actors had been intensely training with military technique; and the highly structured fighting techniques taught by Sim elevated the work to a technical level requiring full focus on co-ordinating the actions themselves, where each pair of actors (one Pākehā and one Māori) had to work as a united team to accomplish the task.

Improvisation

Tohu Kakahi instructed the people of Parihaka to, “Gather up the earth on which the blood [of any ploughman] has spilt and bring it to Parihaka” (Scott 1975: 55). This is the text for song no. 7 ‘Gather up The Earth’. Tohu was speaking to the ploughmen who asked what to do if any of them were killed while out ploughing, as it is Māori tradition that the body be buried at the marae of one’s iwi. Ploughing is a central image of *Songs to the Judges*. It underpins the history of Parihaka in the resistance to land sales, surveying and settlement. The plough is a British implement to domesticate the land, a symbol taken by Māori to resist that domestication.

My initial response to the play was to use an antique plough as a prop but then we began to work physically with images of ploughing, of the actor’s bodies becoming the plough pushed or pulled by other actors, and this image was abstracted and not represented literally, although it underlay all of the work on Parihaka, “At his June meeting Te Whiti calmly held to his course. ‘Go, put your hands to the plough. Look not back. If any come with guns and swords, be not afraid. If they smite you, smite not in return. If they rend you, be not discouraged. Another will take up the good work”

(Scott 1975: 57). The constabulary arrested the ploughmen and took them unresisting to jail, only to be replaced by other ploughmen.

Movement was copied directly from the documentary film by Merata Mita of the Springbok tour to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1981 when police clubbed down unresisting protesters. The Māori actors kneeling in a line in front of the judge were hit by the batons wielded by the Pākehā actors, they made no resistance, falling backwards to the floor. The taking of Parihaka involved a massive military turn out, with canon, sword, constabulary, against an unarmed village. On 5 November 1881 soldiers went into Parihaka led by John Bryce on a white horse. They were met by 200 children who blocked the way chanting songs, spinning tops and skipping. The children would not move regardless of the advancing cavalry, Te Whiti's son Nohomairangi recollected years later, "the soldiers rushed the women and called them 'bloody black niggers.' They swung their swords, threatening to cut the women's heads off'" (Scott 1975: 113). The people sat wrapped in grey blankets, motionless and silent gathered on the marae. "'The land is mine,' said Te Whiti. 'I do not admit your right to survey it. My blanket is mine. Think you it would be right for you to try to drag it from my body, and cloth yourself with it?'" (Scott 1975: 53). Te Whiti and Tohu were arrested, "With great dignity, Te Whiti and Tohu drew finely-woven *korowai* cloaks about their shoulders and moved through their people" (Scott 1975: 117). This newspaper report was enacted by one Māori actor who, playing Te Whiti, slowly wrapped his grey

blanket around himself and walked with dignity down the length of the traverse to stand behind the piano.

Parihaka had its own fife and drum band, the village having adapted the Scottish musical tradition to their own uses, and today one of these drums is played during the retelling of the history to visitors at the marae. During the above scene a similar drum was played in the particular beat of that used at Parihaka, a single unrelenting beat that is unsettling to hear. This was an instance of hybridity, the adoption of a Western musical form into the Māori performance form, and in *Songs to the Judges* the playing of the drum would only have links to Parihaka for those spectators who knew the tradition.

‘Matakite Land March’

Victor Turner views the pilgrimage as a very special kind of human experience, one which I see closely connected to environmental theatre and the articulation not only of fixed spaces but of entire territories experienced not with a comprehensive birds-eye view but as an unfolding dramatic experience culminating in arrival and achieving a calm in the retreat.

I tend to see pilgrimage as that form of institutionalized or symbolic anti-structure (or perhaps meta-structure) which succeeds the major initiation rites of puberty in tribal societies as the dominant historical form. It is the ordered anti-structure of patrimonial feudal systems. It is infused with voluntariness though by no means independent of structural obligatoriness. Its limen is much longer than that of initiation rites (in the sense that a long journey to a most sacred place used to take many months or years), and it breeds new types of secular liminality and *communitas* (Schechner 1975: 30).

The Land March in 1975 was a theatrical event, a political intervention from a sacred Māori site of passage,¹⁹ to a Pākehā sacred site,²⁰ to Government Buildings known as The Beehive. The Land March was a walk in which young and old took part. This event is the point of time that marks the major shift in the process of decolonization.

Rehearsal

I asked the Māori actors to perform this scene walking on their knees the length of the whare wānanga and chanting the song. The Land March was a long walk where those participating suffered physical pain, and there was no way this could be conveyed by the actors pretending. By putting them on their knees they did suffer to some extent, it was uncomfortable and meant that they progressed very slowly through the space, the Māori actors conveyed the suffering of the march and the conviction of pushing through that physical pain and the sense of community that was generated. The actors linked arms and supported each other, and the sheer anger that they directed at the judge as the end point of their march, was palpable.

The idea that political theatre is often outdoors on the street gives the 1975 Maori Land March a particular dramatic flavour. It was a performance. The whole of the island was being utilized as a stage concerned with conscious political and social

¹⁹ From the very tip of the North Island, the place where Māori believe the spirit leaves this world through a sacred tree to travel to Hawaiki, place of origin and return.

²⁰ In the very South of the island.

agendas. “Richard Schechner, discussing the contemporary use of “found space” in 1968 *hypothesized* that the “American prototype” of theatre in nontheatrical structures was “the civil rights march and confrontation,” which converted the streets into “public arenas, testing grounds, stages for morality plays” (Carlson 1989: 34).

‘Once in a Generation’

“The song ... ranges over a hundred years of legal and military suppression, the two working hand-in-glove. [hence my costuming of the Pākehā actors in army uniform covered by the gowns of the law] The day of Thursday 25 May, 1978, on which members of the tribe of Ngati-Whatua were forcibly evicted from Bastion Point is the most recent instance of this suppression” (*Songs to the Judges*, stage directions). This scene was staged with the Pākehā actors snapping to attention to a drum roll and marching across the traverse to the edge of the audience, turning and marching back again, throughout the song, whilst the Māori actors emerged from their blankets to stand and stare at the spectators.

Once in a generation
Comes the impending hour,
The guns come out of their closets,
The law reveals its power.

....

The genial masks are discarded –
It’s as well that we should see
Once in a generation,
The true face of the enemy.

Technically, for this scene, the rehearsals were difficult. The beat of the drum and the rhythm of the marching, did not fit the beat of the song and the singing, and the actors struggled with this opposition between music and movement score²¹. The scene ended with the actors, Māori and Pākehā, united in a line at the opposite end of the traverse to the Judge, turning on him with sticks pointing like guns in a firing squad.

‘A New Kind of Song’

In the text the Māori actors are to sing the beginning of Ten Guitars, a popular New Zealand song by Howard Morrison, Māori entertainer, which song brings to mind the image of the stereotype of Māori singing and dancing at parties. Thompson instructs that: “ ‘Ten Guitars’ is sung – against its normal grain – with great force and hostility, the Maori pair having grown thoroughly sick of the tone which has been adopted. The pakeha group become disturbed and discuss what is happening together.”

In the 1998 production the Māori actors took this pop song and ‘performed’ it as if it was a traditional waiata using hand actions, as a ‘tourist performance piece’, thus creating an ironic reading of the scene. The Pākehā actors observed, playing Japanese tourists snapping photos of the performing ‘natives’. For the Pākehā chorus, Thompson wrote: ‘The pakehas decide it’s just a game after all. They shrug, smile, and just to show they can let go too, dance drunkenly in a conga routine’. In the 1998

²¹ See DVD documentary footage.

production, the music was sugary sweet, with the Māori actors inviting the Pākehā to dance a waltz, but the music was not in a three time beat,

O the music looped our hearts
Like circling pois,
As we danced danced danced
To those ten guitars.

In rehearsal the Māori actors were at first reluctant to engage with performing the action song and singing this song, but once Te Mihinga understood the parody she really enjoyed playing it to the maximum, smiling, winking, and dancing for the Japanese tourists and the spectators! This ‘tourist’ performance where the Māori actors treated the pop song as if it were a traditional song for tourists, who were unaware of the difference, played a similar role in the performance for spectators. Māori spectators appreciated the physical pun and laughed, but many Pākehā could not decide if it was politically correct to laugh, taking the performance as if it were ‘straight’.

In the last verse the four Māori actors formed a diamond shape in the centre of the traverse facing out to the spectators, while the Pākehā actors stood close to them but facing into the centre of the space, nose to nose with the Māori actors, as the starting position for Song No 12 ‘Three Times More Likely’. “One of the reasons many Maoris are singing a new kind of song is seen in our crime statistics ... The growing poverty and unemployment in our land hits the young urban Maori first and hardest” (Thompson: stage directions).

Three times more likely I than you
 To be referred for a probation report,
 Three times more likely I than you
 To be convicted in this court.

The four Māori actors each sang one verse staring eye to eye with a Pākehā actor, and creating a strong rhythm by stamping their feet, as in a haka, to accompany the song. In this scene the Māori actors enjoyed the opportunity to reverse the play of aggression.

Representation

Is the theatre a reflection of life? Is a performance a mirror of life? Can the actor speak or represent the truth? When an actor plays a character do they do so in duplicity? By pretending to be somebody else, is this in itself a lie? Who speaks for whom? The actor claims to be able to speak for someone else, or to be somebody else, or the character claims to speak for the actor,

But how was I born? Did the actress mould her energy so as to transform it into Dona Musica? Or did I, Dona Musica, modulate the actress's energy? ... A character is something which lies in between the idea of an event and the event itself, a strange kind of physical being exactly halfway between possibility and reality (Varley 1997: 8).

But for Māori (a generalisation) there is a problem with representation itself, because Māori make it very clear that they only speak for themselves, not for anybody else, and not for all Māori. Is this why mimesis was not a feature of Māori performing arts? So for the Māori actor, is there a problem with representation in itself? That is

speaking for an other? From the place of an other? Representing an other? Layered onto this complexity of who speaks for who, is the understanding in Māori culture that one speaks for one's ancestors, represents one's ancestors, who are believed to be present now, not dead and gone.

Perhaps Thompson's inherent advocacy of a Brechtian acting technique is a way around these problems of representation, where the actor quotes, and is able to stand back from their character and critique them. Hence in *Songs to the Judges* Thompson does not have named characters, but generic types on stage. *Epic Theatre* emphasises the representation of social relations and the telling of a story, with repeated interruptions and aims to instruct and entertain. Based on the actor's gestures, which are quotable, that is able to be repeated, it is a gestic theatre, where the actors demonstrate their roles rather than becoming them.

The Rehearsal Process

Both Grotowski and Schechner – and indeed all directors in postmodern experimental theatre – advocate the supreme importance of 'the rehearsal process', which involves very much more than the effectual realization of a playscript and the learning of parts. It involves innumerable workshop sessions, some lasting for hours, others all night, in which breathing exercises, voice workshops, ingenious games, psycho-dramas, dancing, aspects of yoga, and in Grotowski's 'paratheater' at least, jumping in mudholes in the woods, represent components. All these disciplines and ordeals are aimed at generating *communitas* or something like it in the group (Turner 1982: 119).

The rehearsal process for *Songs to the Judges* involved many of the elements Turner highlights. As many of the actors had no or little performance experience, my

direction was also pedagogic and it is how I prefer to teach, within the rehearsal process for a performance. Of course, this means that rehearsal takes longer than in a commercial production where actors are cast because they are already proficient in the desired action (for example, tap dancing or singing). But, the joy of the breakthroughs and the trust developed when the actor is pushed beyond their belief in themselves to do something, to break down the 'blocks' or resistances is beautiful. The training, where the actors who did have specific skills (for instance singing) taught the others, developed a strong group dynamic. The development of trust to be oneself, to try what may seem embarrassing, experiments with voice and body, to feel safe to do the physical and vocal research in a non-judgemental atmosphere, involves an element of unconditional love, where without transgressing on another rights, there is the freedom to try anything. However, when there is suspicion and mistrust between races this is a very difficult thing to achieve within the group.

During one improvisation, on the theme of Parihaka, at one point Juanita was lying on her back on the floor, a Pākehā actor laying pieces of chain across her body and face, surrounded by the Pākehā actors. After the rehearsal, in the group circle, she said that she opened her eyes and looked up and was afraid of all those white faces looking down at her. Fear. What would overcome this fear? An extended working time together, pushing the boundaries of what they could do, training together, teaching and learning from each other - these are the things that developed trust, hurt,

forgiveness, being able to be honest with each other. By the time the performance played in Hamilton, the actors had worked together for five months, performed for two weeks, and had developed a strong bond. Travelling and living together further cemented their relationship into an ensemble.

Again I would emphasize: the language favored by Grotowski has moved away from that of performing a play to that of self-discovery and unmediated contact with and understanding of others ... One can see the attraction, the lure, of Grotowski's agenda. Let us create a liminal space-time 'pod' or pilgrimage center, he seems to be saying, where human beings may be disciplined and discipline themselves to strip off the false personae stifling the individual within (Turner 1982: 119-20).

Working with the others in a relationship, not putting on the masks of everyday life, but stripping them off to reveal the 'sub-text'. When a colonising race and the colonised work together in this relationship, to tell the sub-text, the interior stream of consciousness, is to make known that which we usually keep hidden, in terms of race for instance, 'I looked up and saw all these white faces around me and was afraid' (Juanita Hepi).

Conclusion

Underlying Schechner's advocacy of the use of rituals in theatre is a specific attitude toward differences between cultures. 'The difference between "them" and "us" isn't so great, he informed the participants in a seminar on Ritual in the Theatre held in 1978, which I attended' (Bharucha 1990: 34).

What was encountered while working on *Songs to the Judges* was the difference in value systems between Māori and Pākehā and how this made communication and

acceptance of each other's actions and motivations often difficult to understand.

During the process of rehearsal we discovered Pākehā and Māori often had different understandings of justice, land, time, space, people, money, food. Different values, different ways to interact and to relate to these principles, which on a basic level I believe is linked to a difference between a culture based on the individual and capitalism, and a communal culture linked to a socialist philosophy of life.

During the rehearsal and performance process we learnt as a whanau to acknowledge these differences, and to work with and through them with respect for each other. The work was the centre of our focus, the creating of the performance as an ensemble, where we shared the give and the take, the teaching and the learning. Freire maintained that,

Authentic help means that all who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in the common effort to understand the reality which they seek to transform. Only through such praxis – in which those who help and those who are being helped help each other simultaneously – can the act of helping become free from the distortion in which the helper dominates the helped (hooks 1994: 54).

In *Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau* Freire discusses the sharing of resources and knowledge. This idea has been a fundamental philosophy of the Odin Teatret, where the actors have been mainly auto-didactic and have taught each other their respective skills. The original actors developed training methodologies, which were then transmitted to newer actors as they joined the group. This philosophy of the

Odin Teatret as colleagues, partners in a relationship undermines the dynamics of oppressor/oppressed. This was a philosophy that I employed in rehearsal, the actors who came to the process trained in specific skills shared their knowledge and expertise with the other actors, for example, in the vocal training. In a non-judgemental environment this sharing of skills became a bonding process between the actors in *Songs to the Judges* who developed trust and respect for each other. “Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. Men teach each other, mediated by the world (Freire, 1972: 53).

CHAPTER VIII

A SEMIOTIC READING
OF THE 1998 PERFORMANCE OF
SONGS TO THE JUDGES

syncretic dramatists consciously work with the visual semiotics of the body as one of their dramaturgical tools (Balme 1999: 169).

This chapter is a semiotic reading of the 1998 production in its transplanting from a traditional theatrical space to the space of the marae. Semiotics, or the analysing of signs, can and does cover a vast field, as everything in life can be included for semiotic analysis. In Theatre Studies, it has until recently only been utilised in the analysis of the written text, as semiotics originated from theorists in linguistics and literature; for example, the American linguist Charles Peirce who placed emphasis on the receiving of the sign, and the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure who linked the signifier to the signified.

The performance is always more than the written text and semiotic analysis is a tool for reading symbols and icons to articulate meaning for a performance. Semiotics has provided a methodology for understanding costume, music, set and properties as sign systems within aesthetic and cultural codes and provides ways to understand the differences between the written and the performance texts. Whilst the same written text was used for the productions of *Songs to the Judges* in 1980 and 1998, the

performance texts were different because of, among other things, the use of different performance spaces and the different social contexts.

If anthropological interpretation is constructing a reading of what happens, then to divorce it from what happens – from what, in this time or that place, specific people say, what they do, what is done to them, from the whole vast business of the world – is to divorce it from its applications and render it vacant. A good interpretation of anything – a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society – takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation (Geertz 1973: 18).

Clifford Geertz holds a semiotic concept of culture believing, along with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, and that culture is these webs and the analysis of it is, “not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (1973: 5). This definition lends itself to ethnography as a way of reading my work, looking for interpretation of symbols and acts, rather than statistical figures.

Roma Potiki posed the question, “Why perform *Songs to the Judges* in 1998 when it could be claimed it was a play of its time, that it had had its day?”¹ The question of historical context is always important when deciding to direct a performance and led to my asking how society had changed in Aotearoa New Zealand between 1980 and 1998? Was the play still relevant? Thompson wrote the play in a period of hot Māori protest over land rights, “The upsurge in the struggle for Maori rights in the 1970s and early 1980s won important, if limited, concessions, the impact

¹ Roma Potiki raised this question whilst speaking with me after a Magdalena Aotearoa Board Meeting in Wellington in 1997.

of which continue to be felt today” (Communist League: 1997). Between 1985 and 1994 protest was not highly visible; however, the National Government’s proposal of the ‘fiscal envelope’ in 1994, in which \$1 million was to be given to Māori claimants as settlement for all Māori land claims, was a major catalyst spurring the upsurge in Māori protests, “Rather than being pushed into the background, the national rights of Maori have again become a central focus of politics in this country” (Communist League: 1997). The fiscal envelope proposals created anger and uncertainty for Māori who at many hui across the motu (land) made it clear they did not accept it. In *Return to Sender* Gardner documents the responses at the hui and it was from his book that I took many of the movement scores for the production. The politics of the time were as hot for the performance in 1998 as they were in 1980 when Thompson performed it. Since mid 1994 there has been a resurgence of political action by Māori demanding national rights. These have included:

- Meetings and demonstrations in opposition to the government’s ‘fiscal envelope’ proposal to ‘settle’ historical claims for the return of confiscated and other alienated lands.
- A series of occupations of land and buildings to demand restoration of ownership. The most significant of these was the 79-day occupation of Moutoa gardens (Pakaitore) in Wanganui.
- Large protest gatherings at Waitangi on Waitangi Day (Communist League: 1997).

The figures quoted in the 1980 text of *Songs to the Judges* in relation to the socio-economic position of Māori had not improved by 1998, in some cases they had deteriorated and caused further dissatisfaction,

The unemployment rate for Maori in 1996 was 15.5 per cent, while the rate for white New Zealanders was 4.6 percent ... Maori remain three times more likely than non-Maori to leave school without a formal qualification ... Numbering 15 percent of the total population, Maori comprise 49 percent of male prison inmates and 45 percent of female prison inmates (Communist League: 1997).

After seeing the performance in 1998 Roma stated that the songs in *Songs to the Judges* were not ‘history’, that is, all in the past, over and done with, but that the struggle still goes on. She found the performance still politically relevant in 1998².

What I discovered from the 1998 production of *Songs to the Judges* being recontextualised outside the Western theatrical space of the theatre and staged on a marae, was that it seized the power of reading that particular theatrical representation from those privileged to do so. That is, intellectuals who usually had the power of knowledge, those educated to read theatrical representation, were in some instances disempowered by their being placed in the position of the marginalised.

The first scene, not taken from the stage directions of Thompson’s text, was staged as ‘ritual performance’ outside on the marae ātea with fire poi and taiaha. ‘Ahi kaa’, the title of the first song, means burning fires, and signified keeping the land warm as an act of ownership of the land and linked to methods of transference of

² Roma Potiki saw the performance at Toi Whakari (New Zealand Drama School) and stood to speak after the performance in support of its relevance in contemporary society.

ownership of ancestral land before colonisation. Placing the first scene outdoors as a greeting to the spectators changed its reading from the first scene of a play to a greeting on the marae, a waiata performed after the speeches, where it might not have been read as the beginning of the play proper. This song was juxtaposed to scene two, staged inside the whare wānanga. The spectators were called inside with a karanga and entered into a space which designated a courtroom, representing the European method for the exchange of land. These first two scenes set the different cultural values in relation to the ownership of land for Māori and Pākehā, which the rest of the performance developed.

A mis-reading of the first scene, perhaps due to a lack of understanding of te reo Māori and/or Māori protocol, was possible as it may not have been read as the beginning of the performance and as the establishment of Māori value systems, “I may not live on it, I may not build on it, but the land is mine. Ahi kaa, ahi kaa, ahi kaa, the land is mine” (*Songs to the Judges*). This was not a deliberate attempt to make the play inaccessible to non-Māori, but the desire to make it accessible to Māori spectators, many of whom were not familiar with the conventions of theatre. My aim, from the first moment of reading the play, was to dramatize the burning of fire amongst the spectators outdoors, bringing to life this method of proving ownership of land, and to interweave the frame of the hui with the performance in a seamless whole, whilst retaining the integrity of the cultural texts. A mis-reading of the first scene was also

possible if one relied on conventional strategies for the reading a play by interpreting plot, character or theme, because this scene functioned with the use of cultural and aesthetic codes. As Balme argues,

Thus the analysis of a syncretic theatrical text can be approached from the point of view of the functionality and interaction of the cultural texts and not on the basis of conventional interpretative strategies deriving from Western poetics such as plot, character, and theme. Since the dominant feature of syncretic theatre is a particular conjunction of aesthetic and cultural codes, it is clear that the monocultural communication model of traditional theatre semiotics requires substantial revision (Balme 1999: 5).

Before beginning rehearsals I approached Hone Kouka to ask him to write additional scenes for the performance to update it from 1980 to 1998, with new songs added to include protests during these eighteen years. However, he was not able to give time to update the script. Instead of adding new scenes I asked the actors to make improvisations from specific texts detailing various political incidents between 1980 and 1998 and incorporate them into the physical movement score. This meant the movement score did not illustrate the text, but told a different story, being a precise illustration of another incident, that was an historical and famous moment, that could be read by spectators. This layering of movement and text created different levels of reading for spectators, not always accessible to everyone.

Whilst the performance developed largely from improvisation, many of the movements did not begin as arbitrary, for example, the police with batons in the Raglan scene “move, move, move” was taken directly from Merita Mita’s documentary

footage of Bastion Point. Whilst this score was used out of context in the Raglan Golf Course scene it was a recognisable 'gest' from Aotearoa New Zealand's collective memory. The performance worked on many levels with this possibility of reading historical gest over different historical text, where action and words were interwoven in counterpoint. This layering of movement scores based on contemporary issues on top of the text of the playscript created a depth to the reading of the performance that was only accessible through attendance at the performance and not possible from reading the playscript.

Semiotic analysis of the Movement Scores

Many of the scenes were structured with meanings built on different levels, with, for instance, text or song from the play based in one historical moment whilst the movement score of the actors was a re-enactment of a more contemporary moment in history. One such scene was 'I Spit on Your Court',

This song is based on a recent incident involving a Maori radical, Mangu Awarau, in an Auckland court. Like many Maoris today the defendant refused to accept the jurisdiction of a European-style court as binding. He was charged with contempt. Such questionings of our legal system are becoming more frequent and more insistent" (*Songs to the Judges*, stage directions).

In 1995 Hinewhare Harawira was sentenced to six months imprisonment for spitting on the governor general.

Whilst I was researching *Songs to the Judges* the debacle around the National Government's proposed fiscal envelope was in full swing, "In February 1995 New

Zealand witnessed unprecedented action by Maori at the official Waitangi Day commemorations in the Bay of Islands. In the following few months, protests and land occupations were mounted throughout the country, just as the Government embarked on a series of hui on its controversial fiscal envelope proposals" (Gardiner 1996: back cover). The movements of the Māori actor Potatau in 'I Spit on Your Court' were taken directly from the hui at Opotiki on 18 February 1995:

After the Ngati Awa speakers, Tahi Tait, the recently elected chairman of the Tuhoe Trust Board, read out the Tuhoe submission ... Tahi Tait was part-way through what was to be the longest submission of the hui when Tame Iti arrived at the rear door of the hall with a stepladder. Instantly all eyes were on him, wondering what he was up to. It was a brilliant move. The presentation by his tribal elders became secondary as everyone wondered what was going to happen. We had to wait a further 50 minutes to find out.

In a scene straight out of the silent movies Iti moved a few steps every ten minutes. As he progressed with his stepladder down the aisle of the hall towards the stage where we were sitting he was joined by a couple of ferocious-looking gang members ... As the Tuhoe submission meandered on Tame Iti continued his inexorable progress up the aisle. As Tahi Tait finished his submission Tuhoe members of the audience rose to sing his waiata; Tame Iti was now at the front of the hall. As the waiata began he erected his ladder and climbed to the top. He was carrying what looked like a furled up banner, which I thought he was going to attach to the ceiling. Nothing of the sort. As the Tuhoe waiata ended he turned to face the hui with the intention of speaking ... He explained that the youth of Tuhoe wanted to support their elders, not trample on their mana. They also wanted to share their pain ... He told the hui that they had come to expose the pain and suffering of the youth of Tuhoe ... 'E tu nei a Tame iti. Kare a Tame iti e hiahia ki te tiro whatarunga. Kai te tiro whakararo a Tame Iti.' Iti then explained why he had brought his stepladder. He did not want to look up to the Crown; instead he wanted to look down on the Crown representatives. 'Ko ahau te rangatira I tenei wa. Naku te korero. I am the chief now. It is my turn to speak' ... He went on to present Graham with a horse blanket which was their submission. The blanket contained writing setting out

their concerns. The minister's forebears had given Tuhoe blankets as gifts. He was returning the gift with the pain of Tuhoe written on it (Gardiner 1996: 87-88).

In the 1998 production the actor, accompanied by two attendants, carried in a stepladder, very slowly advancing along the traverse towards the judge throughout the previous song. When he reached the Judge's throne he climbed to the top of the stepladder and blew a mouthful of water over the judge and began to sing, 'I spit on your court'. During this scene the Pākehā actors also became tall, the two women sitting on the shoulders of the men, who were hidden underneath by the long gowns of the women.

In rehearsal this movement with the stepladder was instantly recognised by Juanita as being by Tame Iti, who was her uncle and a national protest hero, and she knew the stories surrounding the fiscal envelope and especially his participation intimately. This was also the case for many spectators, who knew of Tame Iti's action and would have been able to read different levels of meaning onto the action of the scene, so giving the 1980 text a contemporary relevance in 1998.

Another incident that was improvised came from the fiscal hui at Waitara, Taranaki on 4 March 1995,

Piki Parker and her Pakakohi people were one of the highlights of the day. Parker is an extremely fierce and formidable foe, who for the last few years has been fighting to have her people, known as the 'lost tribe' of Taranaki, acknowledged. By theatre and chant her group told the story of Pakakohi. It was a story of grim reality and poignant suffering. Pakakohi had been literally

scorched from the earth when its chiefs were captured and transported to Dunedin where they died ...The Pakakohi party illustrated this gruesome stage of their history by the dramatic gesture of emptying several sugar bags of models of bloodied heads onto the floor. It was riveting. It was dramatic. It was very effective. As well they dumped in front of ministers some rusty tools. These, they said represented the payment received by Pakakohi survivors. They also deposited on the floor a five-foot-long wooden replica of a pencil. The pencil represented the weight upon their ancestors (Gardiner 1996: 161).

This retelling of history was the basis of my giving the actors rusty chains and tools to improvise with, and along with the sugar bag became the props for 'Payment'.

The payment that you make me
Will soon come to an end,
The blankets will wear out,
Rusted adzes will not mend.

The movement created for this scene was polymorphic³, the eight actors working in pairs, each pair moving throughout the space to their own dynamic rhythm. Each pair enacted a different narrative of the meeting between coloniser and indigenous people, including trade, romance and teaching. In this scene the spectators could not witness all the action at one time, they had to choose where they would look, and could choose to focus on one couple and follow their action in depth or look from one to another and get glimpses of the action.

³ Polymorphic action is where action occurs in more than one part of the stage at the same time splitting the spectators focus. Each actor performs their own score, and this multiple action makes for a complex dramaturgy.

‘We Got it all Together Just for You’ was a very complex song to enact as it dealt with two Māori prophets, Te Whiti⁴ and Rua Kenana⁵, each with a complex history behind them. In the script the notes instruct that, “The Gilbert-and-Sullivan approach is again evident. The two Maori players sit on the floor, allowing the Pakeha contingent to dance around them during the choruses.” The 1998 production, again took advantage of the fiscal hui, in this instance at Waitara on 4 March 1995, which marae stands at the foot of Mount Taranaki,

the marae also stands in the shadow of the prophet Te Whiti, the pacifist leader who allowed himself to be taken by force from his stronghold of Parihaka in 1887 rather than commit his people to further war against the colonial troops. An interesting connection between that time and the present is the drum used by the marae to beat time during particular waiata sung on the marae. It is believed to be a drum belonging to the constabulary which the tribe have taken as a symbol of the sad events of Parihaka ... What we didn’t see until we were right at the entrance to the marae were the 200-300 protesters sitting on the ground to the left of our pathway to the meeting house. When I saw the mainly young group of protesters sitting wrapped in grey blankets the hair on the nape of my neck rose. I was looking at a reincarnation of Te Whiti’s followers. They sat there silently, shoulders hunched, with expressionless faces. It was completely unnerving ... For the first time in six hui a minister of the Crown was heard in almost eerie silence ... The silence was all-pervading and ominous ... Milton Hohaia sat upright and tense, clutching his taiaha and looking straight ahead (154-7).

This group of protesters in 1995 sitting in the poses of protesters in 1887 was a representation of that action. In the 1998 production of *Songs to the Judges* this action was a representation of a representation, seen in the song ‘We Got it all Together Just

⁴ Te Whiti had a policy of non-violent resistance to the selling of Māori land in Taranaki.

⁵ The prophet Rua Kenana, who had a round meeting house at Maungapohatu, was charged with sedition.

for You’ where the four Māori actors wrapped themselves in grey blankets and sat in a row along the length of the traverse, looking blank faced out into the audience. Brent, who played Te Whiti, was arrested by two Pākehā soldiers, with no physical resistance he wrapped his blanket around him as a cloak and walked slowly in a dignified manner down the length of the traverse to stand behind the piano/dock. The two Māori women were arrested and thrown under the piano. Potatau playing Rua Kenana fell dead onto the floor and was lifted onto the shoulders of the Pākehā actors and placed lying on top of the piano (funeral bier) during the next song.

The movement scores were created from improvisations based on these very structured written descriptions of movement and resistance at the fiscal hui. This illustrative content meant that they were readable on a different level to the purely historical events of the play based in the 1880s and gave the production relevance to the contemporary political situation relating to Māori land issues, not just a rendering of ‘old’ history which ‘we all know’. The physical enactment of these contemporary political protests created deep resonances for many spectators, especially those who had been at Waitangi in 1995 and at other land protests.

In the scene for ‘The Raglan Golf Course Dispute’ Thompson’s stage directions read:

The song is based on a recent case conducted in the Magistrate’s Court in Hamilton. Seventeen defendants, led by Eva Rickard, appeared on a charge of wilful trespass. They were in fact laying claim to their own land by holding a

church service on what they considered to be their urupa or burial ground, which happened to be the 15th green of the golf course. When asked to testify in court they sang the hymn *Tama Ngakau Marie*. The Court's decision to grant them ownership of their own land, yet not allow them to use it, caused much indignation in the Māori community. The song should be given full Gilbert and Sullivan treatment.

The urupa is sacred. For Māori it is important that one be buried at one's home marae and in this culture the ancestors are very much part of the present. With this in mind work on this scene was based on the representation of the urupa. At the end of the previous song, 'The Land March', the Māori actors remained kneeling in a row at the foot of the Judge's chair and were approached by two of the Pākehā actors who, playing police officers, shouted "move, move, move" as the police had done in the Springbok tour protest. The kneeling actors were 'hit' with police batons, caught as they fell backwards by two Pākehā actors, carried to the blankets and wrapped in them creating the impression of bodies being wrapped in funeral shrouds, and left lying, a row of grey blankets along the length of the traverse. The wrapping was performed in unison, in a precise choreography by the four Pākehā actors. The Judge began the song asking 'How do you plead?' The Māori actors replied singing from within the shrouds, in an eerie rendition of the hymn *Tama Ngakau Marie*. Visually and aurally the voices were disembodied, we could not see where they were coming from, the singing was very quiet, it felt as if the dead were calling to us. The Judge then proceeded to descend from his throne and to play golf around the prostrate bodies.

It is in 'Once in a Generation', the song at the centre of the play, that the binary between Māori and Pākehā shifts and the actors stand united and face the audience.

The actors marched shoulder to shoulder backwards and forwards across the width of the whare singing:

Once in a generation
The masks are torn away,
Once in a generation
Comes the naked day.

In this moment the boundaries between black and white, colonised and coloniser were dissolved and the coloniser/colonised binary was 'ruptured'. For a moment at the very centre of the play we witness a collaborative bicultural strength, before the text flips back to the binary for the next six songs.

Semiotics of the Body

The play with ethnicity has attracted less attention, although some performance forms such as Black and White Minstrel Shows or theatrical conventions such as 'black' or 'white' Othellos have been examined to show that on stage at least ethnicity is also a malleable semiotic field rather than an immutable given (Balme 1999: 168).

In *Songs to the Judges* I worked consciously with the visual semiotics of the body, choosing to emphasise the black and white as represented by Māori and Pākehā actors, casting Māori in Māori roles and Pākehā in Pākehā roles. I was aware of various experiments by womens' theatre groups; for example The Omaha Theatre Company which has cross-cast men and women, and of some of the interesting results

discovered from these experiments. For example, they discovered that men seem to be socially conditioned to not hear the high pitch of a woman's voice, so when a man plays a woman's role, the men in the audience listen to what is being said, as the pitch of voice is deeper. However, after much thought about cross and free casting, as in Brook's *Mahabharata*, I decided to push the extreme opposites of black and white. We rehearsed with the floor as a chess board, to emphasise the dynamics between black and white in the battle between Māori and Pākehā for the land. I was not working with the malleability of ethnicity, but treating it as an immutable given, not a politically correct thing to do.

Different cultural and theatrical codes were juxtaposed as a matter of strategy, a setting up of the dialectics throughout the production in a clash of unresolved differences. The last song 'On That Day' brought all the actors onto the stage together in a song of hope or projected utopia. Thompson states in the stage directions that at the end of this song, the Māori and Pākehā actors separate backing off to either side of the stage. In the 1998 production this song was sung with the actors standing in two lines facing out to the audience, the actors then filed past each other giving the rugby handshake⁶ and left the space by doors at either end of the whare wānanga. This final sign, which implicated the All Blacks⁷ as a leading part of Aotearoa New Zealand's

⁶ Where the opposing teams usually just slap their palms together as they pass each other.

⁷ The national rugby football team of Aotearoa New Zealand.

national culture, left the spectator in an unresolved limbo. The rugby handshake is a very ambiguous sign, supposedly one of brotherhood where differences are put aside, where the ‘best team won’. However, the slap of the hands can be angry and violent rather than a sign of camaraderie, this followed by the Māori and Pākehā teams splitting and leaving by different doors, embodied different cultural and theatrical codes at the same time.

The action in the production was to emphasis that colonisation was a violent phenomenon. Today we read the history, about war and the bombardment of the West Coast of the North Island, but it can be a little like watching television when images of war are relayed directly into our living rooms, through a screen (darkly), it is somehow distanced, we watch real violence and death as if it was a movie. We don’t touch or smell it. The enactment in this production was intended to be immediate for the spectators to feel and witness violence in the flesh. Body moves were taken directly from Bastion Point, the largest military and police manoeuvre in Aotearoa New Zealand’s history. Batons hitting bodies, corporeal violence. And death: bodies still, lifeless, dressed for burial in grey blankets, ethereal voices from graves.

Semiotic analysis of the Costumes

Fanon maintains that decolonisation is a violent phenomenon, “the replacing of a certain ‘species’ of men by another ‘species’ of men” (1963: 27). Colonisation was a violent act, with the colonial world cut in two by two different species of men, with the

destruction of indigenous peoples' language, religion, land and dress codes. "In colonies the police and soldiers make contact with rifles. Here it is obvious the government speaks the language of force" (Fanon 1963: 28). The playscript (as literature), and by extension the performance, is in Althusser's⁸ terminology an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). Through the institution of the theatre and visually through the use of costume I wanted to expose the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) which operate in society, that is, the police, army and penal system. I wanted to show on stage the connection between the ISA and the RSA, between the law - court (ideological), and the law - police (repressive). The costumes for the Pākehā actors, consisted of an outer layer which was the black gown of the law, under which was the army uniform. The Pākehā actors played both lawyers and police in various scenes, continually putting on and taking off their gowns to expose or hide the muscle hidden underneath.

The Māori actors dressed in black track pants and Māori independence t-shirts were quite blatant in their politics. This was the dress of contemporary protesters, and a postcolonial methodology.

The predominant colour theme of red, black and white, operated on more than one level. In Māori culture these colours are the traditional colours for weaving, and represent different elements of nature, culture or mythology. In the Māori flag of

⁸ Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', (Belsey 1985: 45).

independence, red represents Papatuanuku (the earth mother), black represents te kore kore (the void⁹, that is, the place of all potential), and white represents light (enlightenment). These colours were predominant inside the whare wānanga, being the colours used for the paintings on the ceiling while the floor was covered in red carpet. The colours also represented different elements from the play, the red, that of fires burning, and the black and white, the binary split between the colour of the skin of the races, which I was seeking to emphasise on all levels.

The Judge was dressed in a black gown and white wig, being the wig Thompson wore in the original production. This had a symbolic meaning for the actors and the actor playing the Judge in particular, and for spectators who had attended the original performance, retrieving memories and creating a counter-point from which to read the contemporary production.

Semiotics of the Properties

Each of the props represented more than just what they were in themselves as objects, for example, the wooden sticks (rakau) were able to be read depending on the context of the scene: as police batons; rifles; golf sticks; taiaha; surveying apparatus and a camera tripod. The grey army blankets, that in the second scene were used as

⁹ Julia Varley argues that physics explains that, “physical void is not a simple state of non-being, but it contains all the potentialities of the forms of the atomic particles’ world” (1997: 12). Here the Māori belief that the void te kore kore or place of non-being which is unlimited potential, is supported by modern physics.

blankets for barter in exchange for land, were transformed into representing the road of the surveyors by being laid end to end along the length of the traverse, and then became shrouds wrapping the dead bodies in the Raglan Golf Course scene.

There are no 'sets' in the usual sense of the word. They have been reduced to the objects which are indispensable to the dramatic action. Each object must contribute not to the meaning but to the dynamics of the play; its value resides in its various uses. The stovepipes and the metallic junk are used as settings and as a concrete, three-dimensional metaphor which contributes to the creation of the vision. But the metaphor originates in the function of the stovepipes; it stems from the activity which it later supersedes as the action progresses ... This world of objects represents the musical instruments of the play ... metal grating against metal ... The number of props is extremely limited; each one has multiple functions. Worlds are created with very ordinary objects, as in children's play and improvised games ... A living man, the actor, is the creative force behind it all (Grotowski 1968: 75-6).

Semiotics of the mise-en-scene

The stage directions for *Songs to the Judges* state that a piano is on stage, and this piano was played in the 1980 production to accompany the actors' singing. In the 1998 production a piano was featured as part of the set with the Māori flag of independence draped over it, silent and not played as an instrument. It was placed at one end of the traverse opposite the Judge's throne and utilised as the dock of the court room. It also represented the caves in Otago to which Māori from Parihaka were sent while being held prisoner for up to two years awaiting trial. In the 1980 production the piano was utilised to support the Victorian Music Hall, Gilbert and Sullivan representation of the coloniser's culture of the 1880s, albeit ironically, whereas in the later production on the

marae it was silenced as an instrument of oppression, a visual symbol of the silencing of the indigenous people's music and performance traditions.

Suspended above the piano was a Putatara¹⁰, spot-lit. Both were silent throughout the performance, visual indicators of a bicultural culture that does not necessarily have lines of communication between the two cultures. These two instruments, central in the space throughout, were open for the spectator's readings. The Putatara was presented in the style of a 'museum piece', an artefact, part of the authentic culture, or alternatively, it could have been read as an object of art, or as part of the living culture, that it is, as a musical instrument used for the purpose of bringing people together to meet on a hui or some other gathering.

Opposite the piano, at the other end of the traverse was the Judge's throne and table draped with the British flag. Two colliding cultures opposing each other across the space, two value systems, two currencies of power, the Judge in control in the British court, but the courtroom set inside the whare wānanga. The exchanges of power oscillated between the representation of a court room and the corporeal presence of the whare with its carvings of Māori ancestors looking down on all.

Spatial Semiotics

Knowledge of the physical space where a play is performed contributes to the spectator's understanding of the performance, whether it is in a theatre or not; how they

¹⁰ Traditional Māori musical instrument made from a conch shell.

enter and where they are placed; whether that theatre is in the centre of the city or not; the façade and the foyer, all reflect cultural and social values and influence how the spectators read the performance. Semiotic theory is useful for analysing the physical surrounds of the theatre because semiotics is concerned with “the processes by which any cultural artefact, such as a theatre building, is given a meaning or meanings by its society” (Carlson 1989: 3).

The placing of the performance on the marae situated on Pages Road caused some consternation from the actors who suggested that we would not get an audience because we were not playing in a theatre, and too far from the centre of the city. However, *Ngā Hau E Whā* has developed a strong tourist trade for Māori performance and culture offering ‘A Night of Māori Magic’, a cultural performance and hāngi¹¹ on a regular basis. The marae runs small promotional performances in the Canterbury Museum in the city centre and attracts attention from tourists who travel out to the marae for a taste of New Zealand culture. Hence, we had an intercultural audience which I would suggest was more likely to occur at the marae than in a theatre space in the heart of the city. This location of course, also encouraged a Māori audience who might not otherwise have gone to the theatre.

Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae is situated on the Eastern side of the city, in a poor area, where many Māori reside. This reflects the drift to the West of the wealthy

¹¹ Food from an earth oven.

bourgeoisie, as happened in Berlin, Paris and London, leaving the East for the working classes. In these cities the centre and the West were the favoured areas for theatres, for example the West End in London. Carlson speaks of the relationship between the space and the outer environment, the suburb, the city, as a 'ludic space', describing the "interrelationship between space, work, and performance as a semiotic process: 'places of performances generate social and cultural meanings of their own which in turn help to structure the meaning of the entire theatre experience'" (Balme 1999: 230). This is a very useful definition in terms of the marae, where the outside perimeter is fenced off with a very definite border, and for outsiders to go onto the marae, they must be called on with ceremony. The marae itself in an urban setting, is not a traditional Māori phenomenon. The majority of marae are located in the countryside on approximately one acre of land, not in a city requiring high fences to ensure privacy for its ceremonies. The urban marae is usually on the margins of the city, not a symbol of power in a dominant white culture.

Marae Theatre creates a different physical space for the performance incorporating indigenous spatial relationships between actors and spectators, "space is one of the crucial texts of a culture which help define it as a *semiosphere*. A semiosphere, a concept introduced by Yuri Lotman and defined by him as the totality of all sign-users, texts, and codes of a culture, is 'the result and the condition for the development of culture'. Central to Lotman's concept is the notion that space and

borders are integral elements of cultural definition” (Balme 1999: 228). Definitely this is the case with marae performance, where the space between actor and spectator and spectators themselves, generates meanings, the audience being inside a living ‘organism’.

By placing *Songs to the Judges* on a marae, the expectations of a theatrical performance were shifted. For those who had never been onto a marae there was the anticipation of the unknown, where the very entering of the space made them participants in the ritual of welcome. Not understanding the space and its purposes on the marae created a different reading for the performance to those who did understand the role of the ritual space.¹²

Songs to the Judges was performed on an urban marae which first and foremost utilises iconic identity, that is the space is not symbolic of anything else, not imitated, but is the marae. However, once inside the whare wānanga, it was used to symbolise different geographic locations for each scene, including a law court, so whilst the marae was being used as a marae, it was also being symbolically endowed as representing other places. This was easily accomplished, by the use of an open space, which ‘became’ another place by the actors’ use of it.

Dramatic space can be divided into two broad subcategories: *mimetic* and *diegetic* space. Mimetic space refers to space depicted on stage and visible to the spectator, while diegetic space is only described or referred to by characters in the play ... The dramaturgical spatial strategies of syncretic plays are based

¹² See more on Marae Theatre in chapter on Environmental Theatre.

on the premiss that there is no such thing as a culturally neutral space. Both interior and exterior spaces are an integral part of a culturally specific cognitive cartography. Thus even an apparently neutral spatial notion such as a living room as a place of encounter is a highly problematic phenomenon, as the Indian dramatist and director Girish Karnad has argued. The living room is the quintessential space of Western realistic drama ... From Ibsen to Albee, the living room has symbolized all that is valuable to the Western bourgeoisie (Balme 1999: 250).

This use of an iconic space, has problems, “because it is located in an uneasy semiotic field between absolute naturalism and a use of space which is no longer strictly theatrical. Spatial iconic identity can be problematic for Māori theatre too, although for different reasons ... The staging of the work in the sacred space of a meeting-house tended to exacerbate an already difficult semiotic situation for some Maori spectators” (Balme 1999: 244). One spectator spoke to me after a performance, critiquing my directing the play in the whare wānanga, because she saw it as an act of neocolonialism, where I was not content with Western theatre space but wanted to take and control Māori space as well.

Songs to the Judges was set utilising a traverse stage with the audience on either side of the acting space, the judge at one end on a bench and the dock (piano) at the opposite end, with the playing space between them. This meant that the audience could see each other across the space, and that their focus was split between looking at the spectators opposite, the judge, the Māori actors in the dock, or at actors in the centre of the playing space. At any moment action was happening in more than one place and

not usually all in the same direction, so the spectator had to make choices about who and what to watch, when. This spatial arrangement did not privilege any of the actors who were all present in the space for the whole performance as Thompson stipulated.

In 1980 Thompson played the role of the Judge himself, seated centre stage above the actors and the audience, his authority was supreme. In the 1998 production the Judge was decentred or displaced from being the central figure visually on the stage by being seated at one end of the playing space. The set was on three different levels, with the Judge raised on a podium, the actors (usually) standing on the floor of the whare, and the spectators seated lower, either on chairs or for preference seated on mattresses on the floor. The performance was designed to be seen from sitting on the floor and I directed much of it from this perspective.

Semiotic readings are difficult to understand outside their specific cultural settings in the time and place in which they are enmeshed. The 1998 production was worked through my understanding and reading of Thompson's text; my reading and interpretation of the written histories of the different songs; my interpretation of contemporary political issues; the actor's readings and their own personal experiences of the politics¹³. All these signifying processes, from 19th century colonialism, to 20th century theatre text, 20th century theatre practice, and theatre practice in Aotearoa New

¹³ A number of the actors had been involved in various protest marches or gatherings.

Zealand, together with the group of actors working together, contributed to the performance and how it could be read performed on a marae in 1998.

Questions of theatrical space engage directly or indirectly with the fact that post-colonialism is finally a debate about the contestation of occupied space. It results directly from the occupied geographical space of imperialism which led to the occupation of cultural space by colonialism, and now, in the infinite variety of decolonization processes, the reoccupation and redefinition of cultural and geographical spaces will be a dominant topic of debate and agenda for action. Perhaps the stage may be able to provide a contribution to elucidating the problems involved (Balme 1999: 269).

CHAPTER IX

POSTCOLONIAL - INTERCULTURAL
INDIGENOUS - GLOBAL

There exists a secret art of the performer. There exist recurring principles which determine the life of actors and dancers in various cultures and epochs. These are not recipes but points of departure which make it possible for an individual's qualities to become scenic presence and to be manifest as personalised and efficient expression in the context of the individual's own history (Barba and Savarese: 268).

Whilst this research topic has been focused on bicultural theatre, there is little published material in Aotearoa New Zealand on this area of performance, and so to broaden the discourse I turn to intercultural theatre theory to inform the research and to place it in an international context.

The main influences in my theatre practise have been people on the cutting edge of experimental theatre since the 1960s including Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook and Eugenio Barba, who have all engaged in intercultural theatre practise and written about that practice. Hence, when I came to write my PhD and construct the title it included the word intercultural. Relating this to performance in Aotearoa New Zealand the issue arises of the possible mutual exclusivity of intercultural and postcolonial, as the intercultural engages with representation of the other seeking similarities between cultures, and the postcolonial distinguishes itself by the recognition of difference between cultures. However, if these terms are thought about as globalization and

indigenization it becomes possible to see them not only as in conflict with each other, but as engaging in a dynamic relationship where the indigenous seeks to retain its difference in a world that is more and more homogenised, but at the same time to interact with that world. To further comprehend intercultural theatre I here focus on two prime examples to investigate, those of Barba and the research at ISTA, and Brook's performance of the *Mahabharata*.

In August 1998 I was invited to observe the month long rehearsals for *Theatrum Mundi Faust*, the intercultural performance being prepared for ISTA in Portugal directed by Eugenio Barba at the Odin Teatret in Holstebro. Twenty days after the bicultural performance of *Songs to the Judges* at Parihaka I was sitting in a corner of the red room, together with performers from Bali, Brazil, India, Japan and Odin Teatret (whose members hail from Denmark, England, Italy and Norway).

In directing the performances of the *Theatrum Mundi Ensemble* Barba follows the principle where, "each artist faithfully preserves the characteristics specific to his/her own style, integrating them into a new context" (Barba: 1996).¹ Barba's dramaturgy weaves together the different actor's performance styles, not endeavouring to alter the forms they embody from their own respective performance cultures. It is a way of directing that he calls 'the Romanesque method' taking his term from architects of the middle ages who used montage to create their artworks, placing in the same work

¹ Programme notes for performance of 'the island of labyrinths', *Theatrum Mundi Ensemble*, Copenhagen: 1996.

fragments from different periods, for example mixing Ionic, Doric or Corinthian capitals. The *Theatrum Mundi* fragments are not altered but are juxtaposed in such a way as to create a new meaning, a new story, a new performance,

A performance composed of fragments remains fragmentary, or else it digs a path towards a deeper unity. In order to reach this point, you have to work within the domain of technique, at a pre-expressive level. Thanks to this work, the actions of the actors can interact and so create a context. In this new context, the nature of the fragments changes. Those which started off as corners of separate worlds become necessary parts of a story which neither I nor the actors would have been able to foresee (Barba: 1996).

To create the *Theatrum Mundi* performance for ISTA Barba utilises the materials the actors bring to create relationships between them. The different performance forms include: Balinese dance, music and mask; Japanese dance and music; Indian music and dance; Afro-American dance and drumming; and the performance forms of the Odin actors. At the beginning of rehearsals the Odin actors gather around the video watching the footage from the last *Theatrum Mundi*, remembering their movement scores. For the new performance the whole cast learn the theme song, with Frans Winther on violin and Jan Ferslev on guitar. In creating new work with the Odin actors Barba uses a process wherein the actors create their own improvisations which are learnt and repeatable, and which he then directs. In the intercultural situation of *Theatrum Mundi* he utilises this method with performers who have a traditional performance background and different working methods. The rehearsal is worked in English and time must be allowed for translation into Japanese,

Balinese and Brazilian, often a slow process, with patience being needed by all.

Eugenio Barba reflects on *Theatrum Mundi*,

While I am apparently just organizing confusion, I have a very clear idea in my mind – a subtext ... I always work with a text, but I don't tell. Because then the actor starts illustrating the theme. That is not the point, because then we would not have the sudden jumps out of the water (Hastrup 1996: 172).

The stage is set with thirty performers, seated in a semi circle upstage, from left to right: Indian musicians, Odin musicians and actors, African drummer and dancer, Japanese ensemble and Balinese ensemble with gamelon. The performance begins with an offering to the earth, audience and actors by a Balinese dancer walking across the stage scattering rice. Half way through this blessing Rathnaraj, the Indian musician, begins to sing. In an intercultural montage of movement, song and music, one by one musicians join in creating an intercultural orchestra combining: bongo drums, flute, strings, oboe, guitar, violin, piano acordion, ukelele, shamisen and gamelon. The performance, which has little text, is built on music, movement, dance, sound, colourful costumes and a visual mix of the serious and the comic, which at moments are juxtaposed creating grotesque images and associations.

This performance is based on the European narrative of *Faust* with Faust played by Torgeir Wethal and Mephistopheles by Augusto Omolu. My critique when first witnessing these rehearsals was that Torgeir playing Faust represented good and Augusto playing Mephistopheles represented evil, with good being represented by a

white man and evil by a black man, and that this colour coding would be read by spectators, even if not consciously, due to the entrenchment of racial stereotypes in society. However, at the 2000 ISTA in Germany, where a reworked (*Ego*) *Faust* was presented, after the performance one spectator said, “Wow, Mephisto said to Faust that he must sign on Mephisto’s terms.” To make the white man sign on the black man’s terms was read as empowering by this person. At the first ISTA, Bonn 1980, Katsuko Azuma (Japanese, female) played Faust and Sanjukta Panigrahi (Indian, female) played Mephisto displaying Barba’s totally free casting both in terms of race and gender. It is the juxtaposition of the Japanese and Indian performance forms that is of interest here.

Directing actors who hail from different acting traditions, with different training and different performance experience, who only work together approximately every two years, takes patience and time. The director must understand each ensemble’s different ways of working and utilise this to the best advantage, for example in directing a scene with the Balinese actor Bawa, Augusto and Torgeir, Barba spent time directing Torgeir and Augusto in detail, whilst Bawa was later integrated into the scene quickly and with ease. After the rehearsal Barba explained to me that this worked because Bawa, like a Commedia character, had his own character which he played, unlike Torgeir and Augusto who were working in a more naturalistic mode, looking for motivations for their characters.

The following is a short excerpt from my notes taken whilst observing the rehearsal process to demonstrate how Barba weaves the dramaturgy between the different cultural performance forms. Augusto, costumed in upper class European dress of tails and top hat, dances Candomble to African drumming, there is a pause, Indian music is introduced and alternated with the drumming whilst Augusto continues to dance. The Garuda (Balinese bird) dances around Mephisto, Roberta (Odin) dances a flamenco based score with a Balinese dancer, the music swells to include European and Indian flutes, African drum and Balinese gong. Augusto dances as the god Ogon ending his dance with his hands fluttering behind his back. The Garuda bird woman enters with fluttering hands mirroring Augusto's movement, creating a transition between scenes by the juxtaposition of two similar movement scores from two different performance traditions. Barba may be 'just organizing confusion' but he has a very sound knowledge and memory of his actor's movement scores and because of this can place them into relationship with each other in a dramaturgical montage that evokes narratives and meanings for the spectators. From my observations, Barba more than fulfils Bharucha's advocacy that, "when a ritual is used from a non-western culture, its words and actions are unfamiliar. The responsibility of any director, then, is first to learn what the ritual means within its own culture, and then to reflect on what it could mean in his own" (Bharucha 1993: 243).

In *Theatrum Mundi Faust*, the actors interact utilising their own traditional performance codes within the frame of *Faust*. The rehearsal begins with a loose narrative structure, in a gathering of materials, however, they are then given an overarching reading by the dramaturgy which interlinks them to create a reading of movement scores that underpins the *Faust* narrative. This European narrative of the selling of a soul to the devil in exchange for worldly pleasures has a Christian reading, of good and bad, black and white, which when placed over the casting and movement scores can be read from an orientalist perspective. Bharucha critiques the possible violence of the director's power in this work, "Another unacknowledged danger I sense in intercultural theory concerns its deference to the power of a particular director in shaping the meanings of 'other cultures' through his *mise-en-scene*. His vision provides the context for the representation of 'other' cultures ... And even Barba's work, which attempts so consciously to reveal the differences in intercultural meetings, is jeopardized, to my mind, by the sheer 'violence' of his *mise-en-scene*" (1993: 243). Is this violence the arbitrary use of pieces of ritual performance by a director in the creation of a different narrative?

What does it mean to take another culture's performance form or ritual and use it to tell a different culture's narrative? But what narrative? Barba's dramaturgy is not comprised of only one narrative thread, but he does not always tell the other threads, the whole in this *Theatrum Mundi* is not *Faust*, but has at least one other underlying

thread as this performance is also an ode to Sanjukta Panagari, with whom the actors had worked for many years, respected and loved and who, since their meeting at the last ISTA had succumbed to cancer. About the intercultural performance Bharucha asks,

But what about the ‘other’ culture? Are its rituals there simply to be used in an arbitrary, personal way? Is it fair to take a ceremony from it that is part of its heritage, divest it of its original meaning, and then replay it for its ‘physical action’? These questions, which may seem naïve and redundant to most social thinkers, concern the ethics of representation. It is with this issue in mind that I question Schechner’s view that ‘Any ritual can be lifted from its original setting and performed as theatre – just as any everyday event can be’ (1990: 33).

One example of the use of ritual and how the actor responds to transporting ritual to performance in *Theatrum Mundi* is through the work of Augusto Omolu² a dancer from Brazil where the religious beliefs of the Candomble and the dance of the orixas were brought from Africa. The gods, or *orixas*, represent different forces in nature, and the dancer takes on the energy of the god as he dances, the “Particular drum-rhythms and dances invite the *orixas* to come down and “ride” the devotee. Each *Orixa*, male or female, has its own *toque* (drum-beat) and dance whose quality of energy and pattern of movements are fixed according to the different “nations” (Ketu, Angola, Jeje)” (Skeel: 141). When Barba directs Omolu he requests certain dances at different moments of *Faust* which in his montage he decides need different qualities of energy, for example, female (soft) or male (hard) energy. Barba’s knowledge and respect for

² Augusto Omolu was responsible for the course of “Afro-Brazilian technique” at the Castro Alve Theatre (where he was previously one of their ballet company).

Omolu's performance form and their interrelated rehearsals, indicates a strong trust between both director and actor. Speaking about his solo performance of *Othello*, directed by Barba, Omolu claims,

I am not letting the Orixas come through in the performance. It is this transformation which is the challenge for the actor: to go out of the ritual and to become a character in another story. In the beginning it was difficult because the images stuck with me. Even when I dance to Verdi I still hear the drums (Hastrup 1996: 170).

Omolu articulates this supplanting of a ritual into a performance as the work of the actor, he is not dancing as he would in a ritual but making a transformation, becoming a character in a performance.

The individual actors work in relationships across cultures retaining their individual performance codes, for example Roberta (Odin) and Cristina (Bali) sing together, and Torgeir (Odin) and Kanichi (Japan) engage in a love scene. In these instances where the Odin actors perform beside actors from traditions with very formalised movement patterns, there is no disjunction visible as the Odin actors perform with the precision of dancers, having memorised their movement scores, and because of their training and internalisation of dynamic balance³.

Watson argues that the focus of ISTA is on, "discovering universals, on negating cultural difference in order to find what underlies performance in all cultures" (2002: 110). Watson creates an opposition between the universal and cultural

³ See Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology.

difference, but do they have to be mutually exclusive? Cannot cultural difference and the universal sit side by side? Barba maintains that,

At this pre-expressive level, the principles are the same for all, even though they nurture the enormous expressive differences which exist between one tradition and another, one actor and another. They are *analogous* principles because they are born of similar physical conditions in different contexts. They are not, however, *homologous*, since they do not share a common history. These similar principles often result in a way of thinking which, in spite of different formulations, permits theatre people from the most divergent traditions to communicate with each other (1994: 10-11).

From her participation in ISTA and working relationship with Barba, Odissi dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi defends the practise of ISTA,

At the second ISTA, again I was confused and irritated. Sometimes Eugenio said things that were unacceptable to me. But one day I said to myself: 'He doesn't want to change my style, but protect it and understand the different meanings of its form'. I began to trust him. And I began to like his way of experimenting. ISTA has opened my eyes to the knowledge of other art forms (Panigrahi 1994: 119).

For one month we live in this other world, secluded, cloistered, thirty people in a room / a space / a red space/ creating a shared magic, dance, music and laughter. Emerging like butterflies we fly to Portugal to the 'Performers Village' where one hundred participants from all corners of the world converge in an ancient monastery high on a hill, for a sealed session of ISTA for ten days, then the open session in Lisbon with a large audience and public performance of *Theatrum Mundi Faust*. In a letter to the Odin Teatret Thomas Leabhart wrote of an earlier *Theatrum Mundi* performance,

The closing night performance was a living model of a theatrical United Nations, a microcosm of the macrocosm of the beautifully complex and potentially harmonious world we live in. Without being simplistic or reductionist, *Theatrum Mundi* was a vision of collaboration which is what theatre (and all other human endeavor), is at its best (1993).

ISTA - International School of Theatre Anthropology

The *Theatrum Mundi* performance was rehearsed to be performed at the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), a multicultural network of scholars and performers whose field of research is Theatre Anthropology, founded by Eugenio Barba in 1979. Known as an itinerant university, sessions (each with a different theme) are held upon the request of cultural institutions which provide the funding. The structure of each session is based around work demonstrations, practical workshop classes and comparative analysis. Based on an empirical approach, ISTA is a school where the principles of performance across different cultures are observed in an endeavour to understand the performer's presence. Barba explains that he began to see the differences between the Odin actor's expressivity and codified forms when the actors went out from Odin in 1978 to study different forms of performance. Different actors went to study in: Bali – *baris*, *legong*, Brazil – *capoera*, *candomble*, India – *kathakali*, Struer/Denmark – ballroom dancing. When the actors returned Barba noticed that,

when my actors did a Balinese dance, they put on another skeleton/skin which conditioned the way of standing, moving and becoming 'expressive'. Then they would step out of it and reassume the skeleton/skin of the Odin actor. And yet, in

the passage from one skeleton/skin to another, in spite of the difference in 'expressivity', they applied similar principles ... I saw results which had nothing in common except the 'life' which permeated them. What was later to develop into Theatre Anthropology was gradually defining itself before my eyes ... This 'putting on' and 'taking off', this change from a daily body technique to an extra-daily body technique and from a personal technique to a formalized Asian, Latin American or European technique, forced me to ask myself a series of questions which led me into a new territory (Barba 1995: 6-7) ... In May 1980 I gave my first public lecture in Warsaw, Poland, about Theatre Anthropology. My hypothesis was that transcultural principles are at the base of each performative technique (Barba 1994: 20).

Transcultural analysis shows that it is possible to distinguish recurring principles in these techniques. The recurring principles, when applied to certain physiological factors – weight, balance, the position of the spinal column, the direction of the eyes in space – produce physical, pre-expressive tensions. These new tensions generate a different energy quality, they render the body theatrically 'decided', 'alive', 'believable' and manifest the performer's 'presence', or scenic *bios*, attracting the spectator's attention *before* any form of message is transmitted (Barba in Skeel: 15).

Barba's hypothesis that transcultural principles are at the base of each performative technique has been critiqued for its universalism, for example, Bharucha critiques Barba's ahistoricity and creating equivalences between cultural energies on an anatomical basis. He is concerned about the separation of the life or bios of the actor from their history, culture and politics. Bharucha claims not to see the similarities of bios between Sanjukta Panigrahi and Dario Fo, but their differences, in culture, history and style. Barba's laws of bios are invisible to him,

This 'Eurasian theatre'⁴, as Barba describes it, cuts across all distinctions of genre (mime or Odissi), and the specificities of time (classical dance or

⁴ University of Eurasian Theatre, where the results of the research at ISTA are presented, at the University of Scilla, Italy.

experimental theatre). It is united through a 'common technical substratum' wherein rests the 'domain of pre-expressivity' – a state of being which precedes the expression of the actor, holding our attention through particular uses of the body (1990: 56).

On the other hand, Pavis argues that intercultural theatre is only effective when, it is accepted as *inter-corporeal* work, in which an actor confronts his/her technique and professional identity with those of the others. Here is the paradox and strength of such inter-corporeal and inter-cultural theatre: the greater its concern with the exchange of corporeal techniques, the more political and historical it becomes (1996: 15).

The research of Barba at ISTA is empirical, based on the observation of inter-corporeal exchanges of performance. A critique from participants has sometimes been that there is not enough room for debate or discussion at ISTA, as Zarrilli articulates, "Should the structure of an international conference allow only certain privileged voices to speak (as the 1986 Holstebro ISTA did until there was a demand for more open sessions)?" (1988: 15). To this critique Barba responds, "As far as my 'voice' is concerned, I know that some consider it as 'solitary' and 'authoritarian.' For others it is simply responsible. Most people come to ISTA with the desire to be confronted with the research that I am conducting (Barba 1988: 9). It can be argued that the debate at ISTA takes a different form from that of dialogue, as Savarese points out, "the lecture/demonstrations at ISTA are transcultural dialogues ... They provoke instead reactions and reflection by presenting unmediated authentic performance fragments without considering the home cultures of either participants or their fellow artists"

(2002: 43). The dialogue is conducted through practical research, not discussion, it is process driven, not findings driven, and participants are asked to generate questions which are then addressed.

After reading the debate and critique of intercultural theatre, and ISTA in particular, including all the variants of the word intercultural: transcultural, intracultural, multicultural, precultural, postcultural and metacultural, I form my own conclusions about the methods of the research conducted at ISTA by reflecting on my experience of being a participant at two ISTAs, and through working with various exercises from the workshops over the last five years: in my own training, in my teaching of practical theatre classes at the University of Otago, and in a year long practical research project with two actors as research assistants. Through my own engagement in physical actor training, I slowly come to understand Barba's writings on Theatre Anthropology.

The 11th session of ISTA in Portugal (1998) was my first 'live' meeting with Odin Teatret and the praxis of Theatre Anthropology. Everything was too new for me to intellectually recognise the recurring principles that were in operation between each workshop while I was engaged in the work, but my body was "acquiring a kinesthetic understanding of other socio-cultural groups" (Turner 1982: 34) and in subsequent workshops in which I have participated I have been able to understand the recurring principles underlying the training. Over the past five years I have repeatedly both

observed and participated in the Odin actors' workshops and am able to recognise that they are often teaching the same basic principles but with different approaches. For example, I can clearly hear Roberta Carerri's voice in my head saying as she points one finger high into the air and in slow motion sinks to the floor, "I am going up, but I go down." Taking this tacit knowledge with me into Torgeir Wethall's workshop, where we are asked to walk backwards to a chair and sit without looking at it, I understand that this action of sitting engenders the same opposition in the body as does Roberta's going up and down at the same time, "The human as bodily presence is the locus – and the pre-text – of action. Action is not conceivable as a mental category; it is materialized, expressed by a 'body-in-life' – evidently so much more than a body merely alive (Barba 1985:13)" (Hastrup 1996: 168).

In 2003 during Augusto Omolu⁵ and Iben Nagul Rasmussen's seminar session, I observed Augusto helping the participants to find resistance in a dance movement where the hand should be strong in the air, as if it were pushing against something. He used his own hand to push against the participant's hands to instil the feeling of resistance in their body. Immediately following Augusto's seminar I participated in Iben's session working with another participant using strips of material to create a physical resistance which we worked against with our bodies, then removing the strips of material we endeavoured to keep the imagined resistance in our bodies. In Tage

⁵ Augusto Omolu, teaching Candomble dances of the Orixas.

Larsen's seminar⁶ participants worked in pairs utilising contact⁷ in exploring principles of resistance both pushing and pulling. Iben, Augusto and Tage were teaching principles of opposition and resistance, but utilising different approaches to help the participants embody this principle of the actor's work, "The performer develops resistance by creating oppositions: this resistance increases the density of each movement, gives the movement altered intensity and muscular tone" (Barba and Savarese 1991: 184).

At the 11th ISTA the training sessions were introduced by the Odin actors, Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Julia Varley and Roberta Carreri who each individually presented a movement score, and then the three scores were joined into one longer movement embodying the different tensions between each of the scores. The participants and masters⁸ learned this movement score, and then each of the masters used this base score upon which to elaborate their own performance form in the workshop sessions. In the training we were not learning a traditional performance form (for example Noh), as the form was created by the Odin actors, but base techniques from different cultures, that could be applied from one performance form to the next, for instance the way to walk in Noh theatre, where the weight is centred in the hips, and balance is controlled in transferring the weight from foot to foot. This philosophy of the training was

⁶ Tage Larsen, Odin actor, seminar Seregno, Italy, November 2003.

⁷ Similar to the contact improvisation techniques of dance, where dance is created through physical contact and the giving and taking of weight between participants.

⁸ Master performers from Japan, Bali, Brazil.

articulated by Sanjukta Panigrahi in an interview with Franco Ruffini after the first ISTA in Bonn, 1980,

F.R.: What have you tried to teach the ISTA participants?

S.P.: I didn't want to teach them fragments of dance. What would be the point of their remembering pieces of Indian dance? What I hope they will remember, on the other hand, is where the points of tension are in the body, how to find the points of strength, and not let the body do as it wants. ...

F.R.: So, although you are specialised in Odissi dance, you have not been teaching Odissi.

S.P.: Exactly. The ISTA participants can derive benefit from what I have taught them only if they rediscover in their own work the problems of tension, control and balance that they have discovered with me (1994: 115).

Barba has never advocated that his actors learn codified forms of performance, even though they have often done so, but nor he has discouraged it, for as he said at the 12th ISTA in Germany during one of his meetings with the participants who were directors, 'actors need justice in the group if they are to stay with the director' and many of his actors have been with him for over thirty years. However, the corporeal contact with these codified forms makes the theory of Theatre Anthropology more accessible. ISTA is about research into acting and looking for the same pre-expressive principles in performance across cultures. The idea of transcultural principles underlying different cultural performance forms does not reduce performance to a mish mash, but gives us as performers and directors key concepts as to how to create performance that will have presence for the spectator. For example, if I stand on tip toe and try to keep my balance, automatically creating tensions within my body, that

posture will have more presence than if I stand as if I was waiting for the bus. As

Barba explains,

In daily practice, “tradition” is equivalent to “knowledge”, or “technique”, a much more humble and efficacious word. Technique does not define us but it is the necessary instrument for overcoming the borders which confine us. Technical knowledge allows us to meet other forms and introduces us to the “tradition of traditions”, to those principles which constantly recur under the differences of styles, cultures and personalities. The aim is not to identify oneself with a tradition, but to construct a nucleus of values, a personal identity, both rebellious and loyal towards one’s own roots. The way to achieve this is through a minutely detailed practice that constitutes our professional identity (Skeel: 92-3).

Rustrum Bharucha has engaged in a direct critique of Barba and Theatre

Anthropology. Bharucha is a theatre practitioner from and living in India. He says, “I resist the equation of ‘Indian Theatre’ with those ‘traditional’ laws of pre-expressivity and extra-daily behaviour that seem to preoccupy Barba” (Bharucha 1990: 61). “As Bharucha argues, Brook, Schechner, and Barba also, in his work at ISTA, are involved in an intercultural ‘practice [that] cannot be separated from what could be described as a neo-colonial obsession with materials and techniques from the ‘third world’” (Watson, 2002: 108).

Barba is interested in discovering the craft of the actor, according to his theory and practise of Theatre Anthropology ‘pre-expressivity’ is the use of the body-mind in extra-daily techniques which are based on recurring principles transculturally. These biological principles are what give a performer ‘life on stage’ or scenic *bios*. In

exploring the idea of these transcultural principles I will endeavour to apply them to the Māori haka, not to reduce Māori performing arts to the universal, but to question in relation to my bicultural performance, if the principles of Theatre Anthropology can be applied to this codified performance form. Haka is the generic term for dance in Māori, but Theatre Anthropology makes no distinctions between dance and theatre, as Barba states, “In the search for the principles from which the performer’s life springs no account whatsoever is taken of the distinctions between theatre, dance and mime ... The rigid distinction between dance and theatre reveals a profound wound” (Barba 1995: 22-23).

In the search for recurring principles in performance Barba claims that “the performers life is based on an alteration of balance” (Barba 1995: 18). His First Hypothesis in Theatre Anthropology posits, “A change of balance results in a series of specific organic tensions which engage and emphasise the performer’s material presence, but at a stage which precedes intentional, individualised expression” (1991: 35). In the base position for haka the balance is altered by an extreme spreading of the legs with the knees bent. Movement is generated by lifting the right foot and stamping in a rhythmical fashion, the movement of the body shifting off its central axis, with weight moving to the left then to the right in a rocking motion. This rocking motion involves the ‘negation principle’ before stamping to the right there is a move to the left, just as to throw a ball we draw the arm back before we throw forward. We see in this

dance the mastering of balance, where the oppositions in the performer's body create a 'balance in action' a 'visualisation of contrary forces' (Barba and Savarese 1991: 39).

Even to walk one begins by falling and regaining balance, as Laurie Anderson clearly articulates:

You are walking, and you don't always realise it, but you are always falling, with each step, you fall forwards slightly, and then catch yourself, from falling, over and over, you are falling, and then catching yourself from falling, and this is how, you can be walking, and falling, at the same, time" (*United States Live, Part Two, track 11*).

Grotowski researched with the actor the dynamics of walking and this is a basic training technique taught through different methods by the actors of Odin Teatret, for example, in Indian Kathakali the weight is carried on the outside edge of the foot, in Balinese dance the big toe is lifted off the ground, and in Japanese Noh the flat foot slides along the floor. These forms all involve an alteration in daily balance to remain upright.

The characteristic most common to actors and dancers from different cultures and times is the abandonment of daily balance in favour of a 'precarious' or extra-daily 'balance'. Extra-daily balance demands a greater physical effort – it is this extra effort which dilates the body's tensions in such a way that the performer seems to be alive even before he begins to express (Barba and Savarese 1991: 34).

In haka there is a dynamic balance in the moments of stillness because of the wide base of the feet and the lowered knees necessitating the performer to make

counter tensions in the body to retain balance. Barba writes that after some years of training the actors at Odin Teatret ,

tend to assume a position in which the knees, very slightly bent, contain the *sats*, the impulse towards an action which is as yet unknown and which can go in any direction: to jump or crouch, step back or to one side, to lift a weight. The *sats* is the basic posture found in sports – in tennis, badminton, boxing, fencing – when you need to be ready to react (1995: 6).

The position of readiness in haka is not just as in sport, but as Tu says in *Broken Arse*,

The war dance has always been part of the warrior's preparation for battle ... The haka prepares the mind and the body. Haka is not for competition – not for playing culture! It is for war! After the haka there is death (Stuart: 17).

Hamuera Mitchell, doyen of haka from Rotorua stated,

In my opinion, the Maori spirit of our elders has been lost. The passion, the excitement and the instilling of fear. Let's be thankful for small mercies, the haka is still alive. However, some of the more essential features are in decline. The male stance is one, he should stand erect, the back should be straight, not stooped, the hands should be firm, the body should be supple, the feet should stamp, the feet should stamp properly, the hands should quiver, the tongue protrude, the eyes dilate, the face be expressive. The body should adopt an aggressive stance, from the head to the soles of the feet, including the fingers. In concert with this, the voices of the group should be loud. Should such be the case, how awesome! (Karetu: 69).

Another principle of Theatre Anthropology is that of opposition. Barba argues that energy for performance is derived not only from a 'dance of oppositions' but, as well from an alteration of balance and tension between opposing forms, "Energy, like *koshi*, is not the result of a simple and mechanical alteration of balance, but of a tension

between opposing forces” (Barba 1995: 23). In haka there is opposition between the downward stance of standing with legs slightly apart and knees bent and the upward pull of having a straight back, of being able to go down low, but of not showing the back of the head and keeping the eyes visible. There are rhythmical moments of being off-balance as the foot stamps, there is a moment before the foot touches the ground when the body is off -balance. The body also moves in opposition between left and right in the stamping movement.

For Meyerhold rhythm was an essential element of performance and he experimented widely with music, “Music, which determines the tempo of every occurrence on the stage, dictates a rhythm which has nothing in common with everyday existence” (Barba and Savarese 1991: 216). Māori performing arts are based on rhythm, with dance and song intertwined and bare feet creating a rhythm. When traditional dress is worn, the flax skirt creates an additional rhythm as the body rocks from side to side, the pieces of flax hit each other in a percussive manner.

In haka the body is to be masculine not feminine, strong not soft, “The lifting of the foot is one of the most elementary features of haka. If the dust is to be stirred, an essential feature of haka, then the foot must be lifted” (Karetu: 75). Tadashi Suzuki⁹ maintains that the way the feet are used is the basis of a performance, the position of the feet even being able to effect the strength of the voice of the performer. In Māori

⁹ Tadashi Suzuki, Japanese director and instructor in physical training utilising a stamping technique.

performing arts the stamping feet maintain the strong energy, the hands in contrast wiri, that is quiver very fast but slightly. The action begins in the shoulders and upper arms, but is only seen reduced in the quiver of the hands. At times the hands slap the torso or upper arms. When using a taiaha in the haka, the movement of the hands, arms and whole upper body alternates between introverted and extroverted, in an opposition between the upper and lower body, where the feet stamp rhythmically up and down, or step in prescribed steps named after the action of different birds, and the upper body manipulates the taiaha in complex rhythmical patterns involving figure eight patterns, spins, and the positions of defence and attack of Māori martial arts. In the performance of the haka, oppositions are created between soft and strong (as in Balinese *manis and keris*), between the upper and lower body and the front and back of the body (as in various forms of Japanese performance) and in direction (as in Peking Opera). About this dance of oppositions Barba quotes Jouvett, “Actor, my friend, my brother, you live only by contrariness, contradiction and constriction. You live only in the “contra”” (1995: 24).

In haka the eyes have moments when they are dilated and appear as if they are about to pop out of the performer’s head, a frozen moment where the eyes open wide and stare fixedly. This action is known as pukana and is regarded as a sign of beauty in performers of both sexes. Karetu explains that, “Not only Maori culture believes that the eyes are the windows of the soul and that the eyes can say much that the rest of the

body cannot. Pukana, referred to by some of the early observers as ‘rolling the eye-balls to and fro in their sockets’ (J.S. Polack), is an essential feature of all Maori forms of dance” (Karetu: 29). Pukana is a little like the *mie* of Kabuki, but the eyes do not cross, and often make contact with spectators. As Barba proposes, “A change in the normal way of looking brings about a qualitative change of energy. By one simple change in the daily way of looking, these performers are able to give impetus to a whole new level of energy (Eugenio Barba, *Theatre Anthropology: First Hypothesis*)” (Barba and Savarese 1991: 105). Barba claims that by changing the angle of the sightline of the eyes a muscular tension occurs in the neck which effects the balance. In the pukana the head is tilted to one side with one eye higher than the other, the angle being altered by approximately 90 degrees. This change in the angle of vision changes the body posture and induces a different quality of energy. Often at the same time as the pukana the male performer will extend his tongue in the *whētero* in an even more dilated facial mask creating the artificiality that is a major factor of the dance.

Barba maintains that the gestures we use in everyday life are culturally determined, although we tend to regard them as ‘natural’, but different cultures generate different ‘natural’ gestures, “The first step in discovering what the principles governing a performer’s scenic *bios*, or life, might be, lies in understanding that the body’s daily techniques can be replaced by extra-daily techniques which do not respect the habitual conditionings of the use of the body” (Barba 1995, 15). In everyday life

we are conditioned to use as little effort as possible to accomplish an action¹⁰, but in performance the actor must 'waste' energy, that is, use a maximum effort for a minimum result. The extra-daily is artificial, movement that puts the 'body into form', different from the daily but still believable. Barba gives as an example of extra-daily technique, as when the *shite*¹¹ exits the stage, he is stripped of his character but not reduced to his daily identity because he retains the same quality of energy that he had when performing his character. This example illustrates Barba's thesis that extra-daily body techniques can exist at the pre-expressive level, before the actor is representing a character.

I became aware of this as a spectator of *Footsteps/Tapuwae*¹². At one point of the performance – after the tangi – the Māori actors moved from centre stage, upstage, to make space for the next scene. It was immediately apparent to the spectator that this was what the performers were doing, because when they were not representing or performing the tangi, they fell into daily gestures and body techniques. These performers did not use their extra-daily performance technique when not in performance/character representation. Extra-daily, pre-expressive energy is the basis of scenic presence.

¹⁰ Taylorism, something Meyerhold experimented with. Taylor was American and developed a system to use as less energy as possible to perform an action, for example, designed a kitchen to place the refrigerator close to the work bench, so as to eliminate unnecessary walking. This was a useful system for factory design.

¹¹ Shite, main character in Japanese Noh theatre.

¹² *Footsteps/Tapuwae* bicultural opera, directed by Peter Falkenberg, Free Theatre, Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand, 2001.

The dance of the haka is extra-daily performance, with children often learning from a young age, the stylised artificiality of the gestures.

“What is haka? ...

Ringa pakia

Uma tiraha

Turi whatia

Hope whai ake

Waewae takahia kia kino *

Slap the hands against the thighs

Puff out the chest

Bend the knees

Let the hip follow

Stamp the feet as hard as you can

A haka from Te Arawa” (Karetu 1993: 22).

Haka involves the use of the whole body in performance, especially the facial expression ... Haka is a composition played with the instrument of the human body, including hands, voice, tongue, eyes, face, feet, legs, emotional and disciplined it conveys messages of welcome, defiance and all aspects of Maori life (Karetu 1993: 25).

“Every theatrical tradition has its own way of saying whether or not the performer functions as such for the spectator. This ‘functioning’ has many names: in the Occident, the most common is *energy*, *life*, or more simply, the actor’s *presence*” (Barba and Savarese 1991: 74). The theme of the 11th ISTA was ‘organicity’. During one session, Barba asked Kanichi Hanayagi (Japanese) if he would speak about the word *iki iki*? Kanichi replied that the trained actor/dancer must be alive, must shine and that it is possible for the actor/dancer to have technique but not *iki iki*. To have an emotional effect on the audience, to move the audience is *iki iki*. Barba then asked if it

was possible for the actor/dancer to have *iki iki* and not good technique? Kanichi replied that a student keen to learn could have *iki iki* but still be learning technique.

Barba spoke with I Made Djimat (Balinese) saying that in Western theatre we speak about the actor having organicity, in the European tradition, and from Stanislavski, what the actor did was to be 'alive', they possessed qualities which made the spectator believe in their character. He asked if there was such a term in Bali? Djimat replied, 'Tdatsu, need strong discipline, and to think a lot, and to pray, to ask for the Tdatsu. But, to ask for the Tdatsu, to make offerings was not enough, the performer could not be lazy. It takes a long time to be a good director or dancer. "I pray. Only the spectators can say if the Tdatsu came to me. The place of the Tdatsu is in the audience. Tdatsu means, when the audience is interested for Djimat." The aim was for the performer to shine, by hard life long work they would shine. This word 'shine', is the same that Kanichi used in his description of this quality of the performer. In Māori performing arts, the performer is described as having *ihi*. *Ihi* is not technique, it is what the audience can feel, they will say, that the performer had *ihi*. This is a similar principle to what Djimat and Kanichi are describing, the energy or the aliveness of the work. At ISTA the research is into the performer, how the performer has presence, the difference between action and presence between cultures, or the energy or dynamic between actor and spectator is queried across cultures. In this particular example, it is possible to compare the replies from Japan and Bali with a similar definition in Māori

performing arts. Gordon Craig said, “There is a theatre which comes before plays, but it is not a building of bricks and stones. It is the building consisting of the body and voice of the actor’ ... Theatre anthropology concerns itself with the reality of this metaphor” (Barba 1995: 44). At a conference on interculturalism organised by Schechner, Sanjukta Panigrahi described her decade of work at ISTA, where she was at first apprehensive, as, ‘The buildings are different, but they rest on the same ground’ (Barba 1995: 94).

One night, in Bellagio, I asked you for your definition of interculturalism. You replied that you were not interested in defining it, that you preferred it to remain a gravitational field, an open perspective, a black hole. You were smiling as you said this. It is to this smile which I am now speaking (Barba to Schechner 1995: 147)

Barba continues that he is ... “interested in a specific intercultural perspective: to explore the pre-expressive level of the performer’s behaviour. Sometimes you share my interest. You say that the biologist in you agrees with me, but that the politician in you does not. Sometimes you participate with me in the discovery of this common land that nourishes the roots of diverse performative practices. Other times, you shake your head, preferring your favorite study, the description of social interactions (Barba to Schechner 1995: 148).

Intercultural Debate

What is ‘interculturalism’? The writings that cluster around the world of this word alternately address theory, technique, politics, aesthetics, theatrical production and critical writing. Interculturalism is linked to world view, practice, and theory/criticism – that is, the mental attitude that precedes performance, the performance process, and the theoretical writing that accompanies performance. A fairly recent addition to theatrical vocabulary, interculturalism, then, is a state of mind, as much as a way of working (Marranca 1991: 11).

Marranca argues that interculturalism is more prolifically engaged with in theoretical discourse than in exemplary performances. As far as performances go she names Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata* and the work of Ariane Mnouchkine and works from the intersection between British or French culture and their former colonies; the influence of Jerzy Grotowski's early work; Eugenio Barba and Richard Schechner, plus the influence of Japanese aesthetics on American avant-garde performance including dance with its emphasis on the stylised separation of body, voice, rhythm and abstraction. Marranca's analysis of interculturalism is from the perspective of living in New York, where she claims interculturalism is centred around the idea of peoples' theatre and pushing this point she leads it to a place where boundaries break down, between actor/spectator, where the spectators become participants, "Here is the precise intersection of theatre/anthropology, the staging ground of Grotowski who, as Polish critic Konstanty Puzyna has pointed out, was the first contemporary theatre artist to link the fields of study" (Marranca 1991: 16). Marranca has suggested that a critique of theatre anthropology might begin with Rousseau, the first to link anthropology and theatre, where he advocates the banning of plays and the participation of all in the spectacle. In this respect the Odin Teatret's barter performances are a good example of the breaking of boundaries between actor and spectator.

When we think of interculturalism, we have the tendency to think in terms of the cultural divisions we learned in school (Europe, Asia, Africa, popular cultures, the cultures of people studied by anthropologists, Judaism, Islam,

Hinduism..). We forget, however, that the abstract term ‘theatre’ in fact refers to non-homogenous phenomena, each with boundaries created by itself and by its context. Limited boundaries sometimes generate a superiority complex; in other cases, they may encourage exchange, create the need to go into depth and to venture forth into the different (Barba 1995: 143).

The Odin Teatret ventures ‘forth into the different’ with its barter performances, and an extension of these performances is the biannual *Festuge*, in which the Odin actors collaborate with both professional international performance groups and local community groups to present a large festival where all perform for each other, for example, archers, fire fighters, or Korean children performing *taekwondo*. The *Festuge* juxtaposes performances by the intercultural communities that make up the town of Holstebro, where the *exotic* can be next door, “as Barba emphasizes, it is the *difference* between people in a ‘barter’ that becomes the measure of their meeting” (Bharucha 1990: 63).

It is in theatre as barter, that Bharucha finds Barba’s work most useful. He cites the Odin work in 1974 in Carpignano in Southern Italy, where the Odin actors began a practice of ‘theatre as barter’ exchanging performances with the villagers, and this work continues today with Odin Teatret organising many barter performances. “What needs to be explored is the concept of performers from distinct social and linguistic groups performing for each other in the spirit of a ‘barter’. Most dynamic of all would be the possibility of *spectators* (and not just performers) participating in the ‘barter’ through their own songs and stories” (Bharucha 1990: 62). Barba has for many years

worked in intercultural exchange through ‘barthers’ where the Odin actors perform for a specific cultural group and then the people of that group perform back to the Odin.

These barthers can happen with any community. I have witnessed a clown performance (by Kai Bredholt) for refugees in Bologna, elements of an ISTA performance integrated with performances from patients at a hospital performed in a riding academy in Germany, and a local community exchange in Jutland, Denmark where the Odin performed *Ode to Progress* and the community responded with dance and song. These barthers are not necessarily aimed specifically at the ‘exotic’ of Africa or South America, and are undertaken with the respect extended between colleagues in theatre.

Another perspective on intercultural theatre is Peter Brook’s production of the *Mahabharata* which generated a heated response from many quarters. An overview of this response provides a good example of the issues at stake in the practise of intercultural theatre.

Rustrum Bharucha reports that *The Sunday Times* called it ‘one of the theatrical events of this century’. However, he believes that,

Peter Brook’s *Mahabharata* exemplifies one of the most blatant (and accomplished) appropriations of Indian culture in recent years ... its appropriation and reordering of non-western material within an orientalist framework of thought and action, which has been specifically designed for the international market ... He has taken one of our most significant texts and decontextualized it from its history in order to ‘sell’ it to audiences in the west (Bharucha 1993: 68).

Bharucha claims Brook trivialized Indian culture by not using any specific form of Indian performance or music, but creating approximations of it to give a 'taste' of India, for example, by not giving Sarabhai

the freedom to dance, the primary constituent of *aabhinaya*. If she could have expressed herself through dance even for a few moments, her culture would have been embodied in the performance. But that's clearly what Brook didn't want; it would have been 'too Indian' (Bharucha 1993: 80).

Whereas Brook argues that, 'we have tried to suggest the flavour of India without pretending to be what we are not' (Bharucha 1993: 71). Brook is positioned between a rock and a hard place. If Brook's non-Indian actors had imitated Indian dance traditions, or musical forms, he would have been critiqued for appropriating the 'other' culture, but by not including actual Indian traditional performing arts, he is critiqued¹³. However, Bharucha's position is not totally clear as he also comments, "I am not suggesting Brook should have imitated our traditional performances, whose discipline requires years of training and total dedication. I respect his decision to create his own idiom of theatre and acting, but I regret that it has not absorbed some of the fundamental *principles* underlying traditional narratives in India" (Bharucha 1993: 74). The narrative structure in Indian performance focuses on the cyclical moments of the story, and not a linear projection from beginning to end. In Brook's production the past and present do not meet, Bharucha argues that it needed an interpenetration of past,

¹³ Notwithstanding that Mallika Sarabhai is Indian.

present and future. Added to Bharucha's criticism is that of Dasgupta,¹⁴ who raises the question of the 'Orientalist' bias in Brook and Carriere's version arguing that Carriere¹⁵ misses the point when he claims that his version has no historical or theological truth, but dramatic truth. For Dasgupta the *Mahabharata* is, in Indian terms, always seen within a religious context without which it has no meaning, "The tragic *rasa* or mode, which the Brook production suggests, is inimical to Hindu norms of aesthetic decorum and religious beliefs. The tragic is irreversible, it is definite. It has no place in the endless cycle of birth and rebirth, the crux of Hindu thought" (Marranca and Dasgupta: 82). What Brook failed to do was provide adequate reference to Hindu religion, because the Hindu religious framework is missing, the whole can be read in terms of the Christian universe of the majority of Western viewers, where there is heaven and hell and no reincarnation. There is also no reference to caste and how it determines the characters relationships to each other and why they act the way they do in certain situations, "caste distinctions had they been retained ... would surely have enhanced the relationships that exist between friends" (Bharucha 1993: 73).

Bharucha critiques Brook for offering a 'flavour' of India, however, he does not critique Grotowski's production of *Shakuntala* on which Osinski¹⁶ reflects, "Looking back on the production in 1960, Grotowski admitted that one of his primary impulses

¹⁴ Marranca, Bonnie and Dasgupta, Gautam (eds). *Interculturalism and Performance: Writings from PAJ*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1991.

¹⁵ *The Mahabharata* adapted for the stage by Jean-Claude Carriere.

¹⁶ Osinski: 1986 (19).

had been to 'create a performance which could give an image of oriental theatre, not authentic, but as Europeans imagine it. And so it was an ironic picture of images about the East, as something mysterious and enigmatic" (Bharucha 1990: 22). What Bharucha sees in Grotowski's production is his self-conscious parodic form, "What was exemplary about the Polish *Shakuntala* though was not its celebration of stereotypes evoking the exotic orient, but its deliberately mischievous, parodic and artful debunking of oriental icons" (1993: 22).

For Bharucha, Brook's *Mahabharata* is an exotic 'Empty Space', not rooted in India, but floating on make-believe. The production raises questions of ethics of representation, about the decontextualization of an epic from its history, and of dealing with people in the process of creating the work itself, "Obviously, all cross-cultural work would have to confront the idea of representing the Other. [...] The Orient, according to Said's study, was not allowed to represent itself, but had to be represented by the Occident" (Marranca and Dasgupta 1991: 76). Dasgupta does not condemn all intercultural performance, but is concerned that the representation of another culture be specific and not 'banal generalities'. For him, Brook's production does not do this, the music is not played on Indian instruments, but abstracted to sound 'like' Indian music, and the costumes are not authentic but only give a flavour of India.

From another perspective, it is interesting to hear what the actors inside the production had to say about their experience of this intercultural experiment. The

African actor Sotigui Kouyate (Bhishma, Parashurama) who is descended from a line of story-tellers reported that the actors spent fourteen hours together each day and it was a family. Yoshi Oida (Drona, Kitchaka) trained in Noh theatre, has worked with Brook since 1968. He said that ‘collaborating with actors of mixed nationality forces one to find and expose what is essential – more authentic relationships.’ Mallika Sarabhai (Draupadi) a classical dancer and film actress and the only Indian member of the company, in her first collaboration with Brook, said that in rehearsal she discovered a link between the African and Asian actors. If she had to explain (as the Indian representative in the group) why something was sacred, the Balinese, Japanese and African actors would understand, whereas the Europeans would want to know ‘why’? She asked Brook why he works with an international group and he replied that, ‘if we can create something that is harmonious with a small group of mixed races and cultures and colours, then the world has a chance’. Sarabhai claimed that if she had been ashamed of anything in the production she would have left.

Bharucha queries the purpose of bringing these different cultures together if their respective cultural forms of expression are not used. Why homogenise them in a Western structure? Why did Brook use the languages of English and French, that were mostly foreign for the actors? Bharucha calls it a ‘cultural salad’, the musical instruments are an eclectic mix, even including an Australian didgeridoo. However in direct contrast to this scathing critique, “Schechner has said, ‘Of the intentionally

intercultural productions I've seen, your *Mahabharata* is the finest example of something genuinely syncretic” (Bharucha 1993: 81).

The conversation ranges from positive to negative across a wide continuum in relation to intercultural theatre. Different ways of reading performance from different cultural perspectives, where each technique can be defended and critiqued. To bring the focus back to Aotearoa New Zealand I introduce Chris Balme and syncretic theatre, which term he applies to an intercultural technique frequently utilised by indigenous playwrights in the drive for decolonisation in postcolonial theatre.

“The topic under discussion [syncretic theatre] is situated at the interface of two highly politicised debates: interculturalism and post-colonialism” (Balme 1999: 270). Balme engages with the research around these two discourses. He introduces intercultural theatre and its critique and the ‘politics of representation’, citing Brook, Mnouchkine and Barba as having reworked Asian performance traditions for their own directorial agendas. He locates these experiments in performance as engaging with the representation of the Other, whilst arguing that syncretic postcolonial theatre has different ideological issues,

The essential difference lies in the fact that the processes of mixing take place on different political ground. Indigenous theatre artists are concerned with writing and staging their own stories using their own cultural and performative material. While even the most serious Western experiments in intercultural theatre are never entirely free of the scent of theatrical exoticism or orientalism (in Said’s sense of the term), exponents of syncretic theatre are by definition situated at the other end of the power continuum ... The trope of

writing or performing back to the centre brings us, of course, to a discussion of post-colonialism, the second major debate ... the common foundation of the very disparate cultures discussed is the colonial experience. Theatrical syncretism is a direct result of this experience and the decolonization processes ensuing from it. It is thus an artistic expression of some of the most important historical, political, and social processes of the second half of this century (Balme 1999: 270-271).

Balme argues that colonised (or indigenous) peoples utilise intercultural theatre for different political agendas than those practising Western intercultural theatre.

Māori theatre retains song, dance and ritual elements within a Western form creating a syncretic form with a balance between elements from both cultures. It is the inclusion of indigenous cultural texts that Balme claims as the definition of syncretic theatre.

This is the same form that Barba engages with at ISTA. From Balme's perspective it is who is doing the engaging that is political, the performative technique is in fact the same between intercultural and syncretic theatre, the placing of codified forms of performance in an overarching narrative structure, which can be from West or East.

From my personal experience of attending ISTA and observing the work demonstrations and comparisons between different cultural performance forms; from my own practical engagement with actor training; from my analysis of Māori haka in terms of Theatre Anthropology and from my research (reading) of the voices for and against intercultural theatre, I argue that it is possible to have side by side the global and the indigenous, without detracting from the integrity of the indigenous forms, and

depending on who is directing or facilitating the work, it can be highly political. I see intercultural and bicultural performance as one way towards developing peace in the world, where relationships are formed between different performance traditions from different cultures, developing understanding, tolerance and respect, in the fight against fear and suspicion of the unknown. When performers engage in a work together it is not an abstract 'Other' that they relate to but an individual, and the language they use is that of performance; as Barba has commented, he did not work with Odissi dance, he worked with Sanjukta.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

it is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language ... we must never cease renewing those images, because once we do, we fossilise (Friel 1984: 66).

"The dead are the true, diverse interlocutors, Richard. Not macabre corpses, but invisible presences. The interculturalism which challenges me most is the vertical one. Eugenio" (1995: 150). In this letter to Schechner, Barba discusses the events organised by Odin Teatret at the *Festuge*, 1991, 'Culture Without Borders',

The title 'Culture Without Borders', which might seem optimistic, has a malicious undercurrent. When the delineation of borders is lost, identity is threatened. And insecurity over identity leads to rigour, to an exasperated attempt to give oneself a profile by opposing others. Intolerance, xenophobia and racism come out into the open (Barba 1995: 143).

During the *Festuge* a symposium was held on Danish cultural politics and one of the topics discussed by politicians and administrators was, "culture as a means of conquering and safeguarding identity in a Europe which is in the process of abolishing borders" (Barba 1995: 143).

In relation to the abolishing of borders, in 2002 I was invited to give a paper at a conference entitled, Globalization and Indigenization, where I spoke to a condensed version of the chapter on music in this dissertation. The conference¹ was a forum for an international group of musicians who were making a stand against the implementation of free trade in the music industry, in the drive towards the globalization of culture. Once

¹ Chaired by Professor John Drummond, School of Music, University of Otago.

music is commercialised on an international scale, with no protection or recourse to subsidy within a country, indigenous and national musics will fight to survive. How do we negotiate the turbulent waters between retaining indigenous culture and living in the global village? How do we retain identity without oppression?

Bhabha and Harris use the term hybridity, not as a cross-breeding or joining together of two different into one new, but as a bridge, where difference is negotiated by equal exchange and respect for the other culture. This idea of bridging expresses my own desire in directing *Songs to the Judges* to create a performance space of collaboration and exchange between cultures, neither assimilating nor exploiting, but in an egalitarian give and take.

Barba also discusses performance techniques in terms of hybridity and globalization arguing that the,

fascination with the surface, which today because of the intensity of contacts risks subjecting the evolution of traditions to rapid accelerations, can lead to homogenizing promiscuity. How does one manage to eat the results obtained by others, while also having the time and chemistry to digest those results? The *opposite* of a colonized or seduced culture is not a culture which isolates itself but a culture which knows how to cook in its own way and to eat what it takes from or what arrives from the outside (1995: 14-15).

Barba is not advocating a nationalistic withdrawal from the world in order to keep one's identity, but suggesting there are ways to retain identity and inter-relate with other cultures. But how is this to be implemented in practical terms? In Aotearoa New

Zealand since 1960 it is possible to identify different stages in the development of Māori theatre. In the 1980s Māori were seeking better representation on the stage, and then an era of separatism developed, a move from bicultural performance to Māori performance. This stage is necessary for a marginalised group to form a sense of identity, to control the processes of production, the writing and directing of the plays, but it increases anxiety, from Pākehā outside the boundaries, and creates new boundaries to control.

Bharucha, who supports nationalism and opposes interculturalism, states,

Inevitably, these thoughts about nationalism made me question its relationship to interculturalism. One of the most ardent supporters of interculturalism, Richard Schechner, clearly sees the birth of nation-states as one of the greatest deterrents, if not destroyers of intercultural exchange in our world. In his essay entitled 'The End of Humanism,' he states: Clearly nationalism, and its rivalries, armaments, boundaries – culminating in the nuclear catastrophe of mass extinction – is something we humans are going to have to learn to get rid of. Learn to be intercultural? More like unlearn what is blocking us from returning to the intercultural. While this position clearly reveals that Schechner can afford to transcend nationalist strictures, since the political unity and power of the United States are unquestionable, I believe that we have to be much more cautious in countries like India and Indonesia, where nationalism has emerged only in the last four decades after centuries of colonial rule. Whether we like it or not, we have to strengthen our idea of the nation in India ... the challenge in India is to create a 'national culture' that does not homogenize the specificities of our so-called 'regional' cultures (1993: 155-6).

Bharucha's nationalistic stance only reverses the binary in the 'them' and 'us' opposition. But there is another stance, which is to destabilise the structure of dominance, but first the idea of binary oppositions must be questioned, and with it notions of racial identity, in the bid to change the structures of oppression. Dale argues

that, “without scrutinising the notion of binary oppositions and with them our present concepts of racial identity, the structures of oppression will never change” (1997: 119-120).

It is this examination of binary oppositions that I was seeking to make very visible in the 1998 production of *Songs to the Judges*. The idea to push the binaries of black and white was one which put the production on a tightrope, that is, where it could easily have fallen into being seen as neocolonial. Thompson wrote this songplay about the historical experience of imperialism. The play plays with the binaries of 'us' and 'them' in the language of imperialism. Both imperialism and resistance to it are placed side by side in a dialectical relationship, song by song. As Said argues, "Western imperialism and Third World nationalism feed off each other" (1994, xxvii). Today these binary oppositions are seen as not politically correct, and for me to represent them graphically as black and white, us and them, was critiqued by some. However, when Bharucha saw the performance, he commented, "what a brave thing to do nowadays in a time of open casting". My reason for doing so was to represent corporeally the language of imperialism, as it was applied, not how it is necessarily today. To place the representation hard hittingly in the binaries that have been so prevalent and pervasive in Aotearoa New Zealand's history.

Throughout the exchange between Europeans and their 'others' that began systematically half a millennium ago, the one idea that has scarcely varied is that there is an 'us' and a 'them', each quite settled, clear, unassailably self-evident. As I discuss it in *Orientalism*, the division goes back to Greek thought about barbarians, but, whoever originated this kind of identity thought, by the nineteenth century it had become the hallmark of imperialist cultures as well as those cultures trying to resist the encroachments of Europe (Said 1994: xxviii).

A critique of the 1998 performance of *Songs to the Judges* was that it was time to move on, we were all over that, money had been paid in restitution. However, it is a principle of conflict resolution that loss and damage need to be acknowledged before people can move on. What was clear from this kind of reaction was that many people had no idea of the devastation that colonisation has caused.

My aim in the production of *Songs to the Judges* was to show the polarities, the binaries in performance, to perform the past and the construction of those binaries, to challenge and expose the ways difference was constructed in the act of colonisation. Cultural invasion, where the invaders impose their own culture, values and worldview on that of the indigenous people, is always an act of violence against the invaded culture, "There would be no oppressed had there been no prior situation of violence to establish their subjugation" (Freire 1972: 31). The play is didactic; it is in Freire's terms a pedagogy of the oppressors, and the oppressed (in some cases). "To surmount the situation of oppression, men must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation" (Freire 1972: 24).

The Wooster Group is now working on Kyogen in a way that I have no doubt will be completely offensive to most people in that same way that their work on black vaudeville routines offended everyone ten years ago. Their capacity for interculturalism is completely offensive, but it is that friction that produces genuine culture, as opposed to the sort of polite, respectful, ‘After you Alphonse,’ ‘No, no, Gaston,’ thing that actually keeps the barriers in place and has everybody walking on tiptoe (Marranca: 189).

After one of the early rehearsals, Stassa said to the group, “We are all being so bloody PC that we can’t even talk to each other”. Everybody in rehearsal was being polite, and politely retaining the barriers between Māori and Pākehā. The politeness had to go and with it the barriers, before the real work of rehearsal could begin to grow. This experience of difference was part of the research, the work of the actors in rehearsal, who had to negotiate their own cultural differences and racism. Basically, the actors became guinea pigs for observation in this process. Some audience members commented that they could see the deep supportive relationships between the actors of the different races, even though they were playing out a highly structured black/white oppositional dynamic, that they knew the actors didn’t really hate each other. That the spectator could differentiate the actor from the character portrayed, perhaps was an effect of the Brechtian alienation within the writing of Thompson’s text.

Postcolonial subjects, do we see postcolonial subjects on the stage, or do we see ‘Others’ to ourselves? Objects of curiosity? But who is looking? The audience is split between Māori and Tauīwi, this is not necessarily a predominantly white audience, so

who is constructing others? Who become the objects of curiosity? Is this even a question? The production is directed for audiences who may not be theatre literate, or in other words it is directed to be read by a new audience for theatre, hence much of the movement is quite illustrative and one reason why I gave up the idea of cross-dressing or cross-casting the actors. The production has different readings from those accessible to theatre literate people, and in this sense is transgressive in that they become frustrated in their loss of knowledge/power. For people who expect to be in control in the theatre, to know it all and be able to read it, aspects of this production could be beyond their translatable reach.

An aim in directing *Songs to the Judges* was born at Parihaka, when I thought that as a theatre director I had the power to disseminate information to a wide audience. How successful was *Songs to the Judges* as postcolonial theatre, as resistance theatre, as a strategy of decolonization? What Brecht articulates in the *Messingkauf Dialogues*, was what I set out to do,

THE PHILOSPHER: Allow me to tell you that the millions who are in danger and misery have no idea what the causes of that danger and misery may be. There is however a considerable minority that has quite a good idea ... The persecutors can only be got rid of once enough people understand the causes of their dangers and miseries, and the way things really happen, and how to get rid of the persecutors. So it's a question of communicating this understanding to as large a number as possible (Brecht 1965: 30).

As a Pākehā woman directing a bicultural cast, one of the problems to be overcome in the process was how to avoid becoming a ‘controller’ whilst still retaining artistic licence. The director is in one sense always the controller, with the last word, however, I sought input from the actors and worked in close collaboration with kaumatua, Rai Rakatau, who played a powerful role in the rehearsal process.

In the Maori world I am an outsider, a visitor, and always will be. All my experience does not, and cannot, alter that fact. It is fashionable to call such a stance that of ‘the other’ (Fabian: 1983). And that I am. I now feel no urge to argue for a common identity, for if I do I only emphasise ‘otherness’ (Ritchie: 51).

Ritchie’s statement applies for me. In my work with bicultural theatre I admit my lack of knowledge in things Māori and seek guidance in kawa/protocol. Rai and I worked with a dual power dynamic. As a whānau we performed our differences, we learnt new forms together, with a director and a kaumatua working together to negotiate the pitfalls of a bicultural relationship in an exchange where we met as cultural equals within the rehearsal room.

The question arises how this work about Māori Land Rights written by a white male almost twenty years ago engages politics of race in contemporary society. The production raises questions of what the word bicultural means in Aotearoa New Zealand. Is it only possible for Māori to produce bicultural works? This belief was expressed to me at the beginning of the project, that ‘When it fails you will still be able to write about

it. You can't do bicultural theatre because you are white. Only Māori can do bicultural theatre. Biculturalism is Māori not Pākehā. You cannot do biculturalism. You are not bicultural. If Māori do it, it is bicultural. If Pākehā do it, it is stealing culture.' I set out at the beginning of this research project with the question, 'is it possible for me as a Pākehā woman to direct a bicultural production, not committing acts of neocolonialism but facilitating a site of decolonization'? In terms of globalization and indigenization, Watson asks a similar question to my hypothesis of directing a bicultural performance with an emphasis on exchange and equality or respect, "Can performance be a part of a genuine exchange between cultures based on mutual respect rather than hegemonic instincts? (2002: 110).

The bringing together of Pākehā who had never been onto a marae, and Māori who had never been to a theatre performance was part of the politics of decolonisation of the production, the kaupapa (philosophy) of its bicultural emphasis was the intermingling of the two cultures in the belief that knowledge of the other's culture helps destroys ignorance and prejudice.

In the creation of the performance, material was generated by the actors through improvisations, individually and collectively, and as Chaikin acknowledges, "it has sometimes been possible to join with others in a common effort so intense that at the end of a project I have been unable to say which part was my work and which part

belonged to someone else” (Hodge 2000: 3). In this rehearsal process the group worked intensely, daily, collectively, everybody always in the room while the rehearsal was in progress, and the performance became collectively owned. The actors so readily accepted and worked with my direction, that they owned that as well, often believing the ideas were all their own, and then wondering what the director had been doing. When this happens I feel my work has been successful because I have helped facilitate the actors full immersion in the creation of the performance.

Theatre on any terms is difficult to negotiate in this land where the ‘man alone’ has been the national myth and where sport is idolised. As Bruce Mason said in 1966 in a lecture entitled ‘Drama and Ritual’

So there’s our problem: of working in a country which will admit only games as viable rituals, and whose view of that un-person, that un-worker – the artist – is suspicious; a country which has several purely masculine athletic rituals collectively amounting to a national religion, which alone is taken seriously ... A country whose social relationships are notably dislocated so that men and women do not mix with ease or comfort except in bed (Dowling 1986: 135).

Resistance to the play

It was interesting the resistance I had to the production even before it opened, from both Pākehā and Māori, obviously the thought of the production was threatening for both cultures. Stuart Devenie comments on his experiences of interacting in bicultural performance as,

The thing about it is that there is a space between us and it is a space of great pain, great danger, or great joy, and we don't know what it is going to be when we enter it ... we actually have to confront those things (Greenwood 2002: 40).

I was confronted by the irate composer, who later came to see the work in Hamilton and after the performance spoke to spectators gathered around saying the performance was professional and apologised for his prior misgivings. My comments during the rehearsal period were, "It is amazing that this production is meeting such resistance from all quarters even before it is seen. Just the thought of it happening seems to be very threatening to a lot of people". Andy had a letter from someone in the North Island, who produces religious music, to say that William Dart would be very unhappy. *Songs to the Judges* had been performed as a school production with jazz instruments, it is difficult to see how these instruments, being different to the piano the score was composed for, are any different from say, using a kōauau. The ability for this play to work as bicultural theatre becomes questionable with the censorship of the composer. I suggest that this is an instance of cultural colonisation, where the piano suppresses the kōauau, the piano as a symbol of cultural capital and colonisation.

Another resistance to the performance was that of not being funded. There is a coercive form of censorship in Aotearoa New Zealand in that if there is no funding from the national arts funding organisation, Creative NZ, there is no production. *Songs to the Judges* was promised funding twice and twice did not receive funding, so I did it anyway.

Fortunately the performance was able to tour to Hamilton to the FUEL Festival, ADSA and Parihaka with funding from a Catholic source². Many thanks to Helen Gibson who made this possible. I do not know why *Songs to the Judges* was not funded as a bicultural performance, I can only surmise that it was too political in its addressing head on the politics of the past and not saying 'let's forget it and move on', or that Thompson's own personal history was still being held against him.

Spectator Response

It should be seen on every campus throughout the country.
(President of NZ Students Association)

We are now at least equally likely to look at the theatre experience in a more global way, as a socio-cultural event whose meanings and interpretations are not to be sought exclusively in the text being performed but in the experience of the audience assembled to share in the creation of the total event (Carlson 1989: 2).

Edward Said asks the following questions: 'Who writes? For whom is the writing being done? In what circumstances? These it seems to me are the questions whose answers provide us with the ingredients making a politics of interpretation. These questions are important ones (Smith 1999: 37).

Thompson was a Pākehā writing a bicultural play, targeting a predominantly Pākehā audience. The 1998 performance was more focused for a Māori audience.

At *Ngā Hau E Whā National Marae* Māori spectators would often stand at the end of the performance to respond as this is a part of the protocol of the ritual of encounter of the hui. People stood to sing, chant, karakia, and tell their own stories: about how the

² The Father John Curnow Memorial Trust, involved in Treaty workshops and promoting bicultural performance.

performance affected them, making them angry or sad, or how it brought back memories. This was a time when the spectators could perform for us, as in a barter situation, in an exchange. Another accepted practice in Māori culture is to call out appreciation of a song or speech during the performance itself. The Pākehā actors were thrown by this the first few performances, but learnt to expect this interaction, “people greet *waiata* with murmurs of approval in Maori (“*Tēnā koutou!*” ... “*Kia ora!*”) they greet action songs with applause. Applause is only given on the *marae* for non-traditional performances” (Salmond 1975: 112).

As did Mervyn’s performance of *Songs to the Judges*, our closing nights in Christchurch and Hamilton received standing ovations from full houses. Rona Bailey in a letter to Mervyn said about *Songs to Uncle Scrim*, “this was ‘me’ ... my culture and life were inextricably linked with what I saw.” This was Rai Rakatau’s response too, and what he has been saying to Māori throughout the country, “This is us’. It made me angry like I have not been angry for a long time and that is good. I saw it every night and I cried every night for the first four nights, then I got very angry with the Judge.”

Many Māori said that it made them feel very angry, more angry than they had felt in years, that it revived that anger that had gone to sleep and they were glad to be reminded of the struggles and violence in our joint history. Pākehā and Māori both

wanted a wide audience to see the play because it tells our common history that many people did not know.

Bharucha believes that, “the strongest resistance to cultural domination lies in creative work” (Bharucha 1993: 8). This was a message that was understood by a number of spectators of *Songs to the Judges*, who would talk with me after the show to say that they were inspired to go and make their own dramas as it was a good way of getting a message across, of having a voice, and Te Miringa Hohaia endorsed this. He was interested in making a further theatre work set in the courtroom, especially as his own resistance work has been predominantly based in land courts. In the performance at Parihaka when the Judge entered and waited for all the audience to rise while he sat, nobody moved, no one stood up! This was the first time that spectators had not obeyed the command ‘All stand for the Judge’.

Throughout the rehearsal and performance of the play there were differing responses. For one high school student, who had this history on her school curriculum, it was boring, and made her feel guilty. Other university students found it enlightening, particularly relating to the music and I was asked to make a CD of the sound score.

In Hamilton at the ADSA (Australasian Drama Studies Association) Conference, Australian spectators were in tears. One woman said, “Thank you, we in Australia know

we have a bad track record, but we believe New Zealand does not. It is good to see/hear some other side of the history of colonisation.”

One American response was, “it’s a cliché, its just the same story as Custar or the Cioux, I’ve heard it all before.” This is a very perceptive comment, since WWII New Zealander’s have been colonised by the United States of America through media such as film and television. As a child I saw serial films at the local movie theatre of cowboys and Indians – where the Indians were the baddies and the cowboys were always the heroes who won. At forty years of age I knew more of the myth of American colonisation than I did of Aotearoa New Zealand history. I, for one, had never heard of Parihaka, it was taken off the official map of Aotearoa New Zealand and renamed. This was one of the aims of producing the play, to tell this particular story of Aotearoa New Zealand history. Many did not know that the government had passed Acts of Parliament to permit the imprisonment of Māori for up to two years without trial.

After a performance in Hamilton Rustrum Bharucha talked to me for a long while, and commented, “You are doing in practice what I do in theory.” He said it was not usual to see the strong racial split in actors in intercultural performance, where a policy of free casting often operates. He supported the binary opposition saying that it was a very brave thing to do.

In a letter to me after seeing the performance at the Waikato Museum, William Dart (the composer) wrote,

Certainly, the spirit of Mervyn hovered over the evening, and you all brought his words to life with a tremendous power and unflinching energy. *Judges* is one of those theatre works that has the power to take you in its grip and hold you there until the last word/chord. I know myself, when I was touring it and playing piano, it was impossible to resist being caught up in the inevitability of it all, and *On That Day* was always such a wonderful release. Almost a ray of light – although we had some criticism for ending the show with a taste of honey in the mouth. We were often in a cold sweat by then! ... Of course I missed some of the “musical” content here and there. The *Raglan* song and *Scales of Justice* are damned tricky without “the arrangement”, and what you did was resourceful and most effective theatrically ... and I do feel rather guilty about my initial worries, but it did seem at one point as if the show was going to be torn asunder and “interleafed” with other material, which would have been rather bizarre! (2 July 1998).

Song No 19, *On That Day* – should we have cut it? How did it work for spectators? Spectators were often in tears just before the ending, and stated after the performance that they needed this time to ease down after the hard hitting pace of the whole play, that to have cut it would not have given them time to dry their eyes. Spectators may have appreciated it, but I would have preferred to leave them without a space to regain their composure (it was only the composer’s insistence that I not alter the written score that I did not cut it) and endeavoured to make the split between Māori and Pākehā directly after the song hard hitting.

An important aspect of my research was intended to be focused on audience response, and the camera operator interviewed people after each performance at Ngā Hau

E Whā. A number of these were key interviews, with selected people giving in depth analyses of the performance. Unfortunately none of this material was of a quality that could be used in any way. Lacking this incisive material, some of it with people who have since passed on, I later conducted a number of interviews with people about their responses to the performance, and include this material below. Helen Gibson and Anne Winstanley were interviewed together and they both saw the performance on more than one occasion.

Helen: It was a total experience it was like going on a journey, you know each time, it was different each time. The eye contact with the actors was so powerful and the other thing at the marae, was that you were actually sitting lower than the actors.

Helen: There is no social mandate in our culture for that, our social memory has blocked all that stuff off – over time, our social memory has totally blocked that off and so I don't think it would be safe to perform that in a Pākehā setting.

Anne: You are out of your comfort zone, you don't belong.

Helen: Compared to going to the [Treaty] workshop the play was 100 times more objective.

Ann Winstanley's nephew Nick, a student of film at Victoria University, commented on the production: It was scary, confrontational. When this actor came up to me and looked in my face, I thought I haven't done anything. It's not my fault. I saw it as a Māori production not bicultural. Told by Māori. It hasn't changed my life, I'm just a middle class white male.

The theatre's raw material is not the actor, nor the space, nor the text, but the attention, the seeing, the hearing, the mind of the spectator. Theatre is the art of the spectator (Barba 1995: 39).

Interview with Patricia Wallace: Nov 2000

Lilicherie: What did you see and feel as an audience member?

Patricia: To start with I think the audience response probably depends enormously on the audience's personal background and on their knowledge of Māori tikanga, so it would be very different for different people. Now, I have got a bit of Māori background and a bit of knowledge, whereas my husband is Pākehā and didn't really have that knowledge at all. So for the two of us it was a different experience altogether. I think right at the beginning, the part right outside the house with the poi and the fire and the *ahi kaa* was really really exciting and very well done. But there again its got different levels of meaning. For me, the use of the poi and the flames was demonstrating keeping the fires, the home fires burning. Whereas for my husband, he wouldn't have seen that. He wouldn't have known that. And I thought that was a really magic kind of moment the way that started, because of those different levels of meaning. And then we get inside ... the amazingly clever use of the blankets and the multi use of the sticks as guns and tripods, and all the other bits, that was really clever too. I found myself doing explanations to my husband with bits and pieces that were going on like the Raglan business and building over the urupa. The conch hung above the piano symbolising that you hadn't been given permission to use the music. As I said before it really depends on how much you know about that period of Māori history and what you see in it because so many people are still unaware of Parihaka and New Zealand history. And it just brought home so many bits, it was very rich.

Lilicherie: It was you who brought me to Parihaka in the first place in 1994.

Patricia: Yes, yes I had forgotten about that.

Lilicherie: ... But I have never wanted to do that piece in the theatre traditionally. I tried to use the Provincial Buildings, which were once the Māori Land Court.

Patricia: It would stand without that, the performance you did would stand without the space. It could almost be quite good as an open air performance – can you see it as an open air performance?

Lilicherie: The first time I tried for funding was for *Summertimes* as an open air performance and I wanted to situate it outside the Town Hall opposite the Law Courts – but they didn't fund it. I think in a way it was too political for them.

Patricia: That's true. I think sometimes bureaucracy gets a little bit scared of what might eventuate – I don't really think they need to be scared – even if it only made people go away and think a bit it would have been good value. The process of understanding Māori and land issues can't just come quickly, they can't take it all in one go, all the things that have happened and what those different things meant to Māori. Its still a developing thing, I think my husband got more understanding of what happened in New Zealand.

Patricia: But do you think that using those special spaces might have restricted the audience that you got to it? Because the people who are prepared to go onto a marae and see a play that challenges their knowledge of history are people who are prepared to question things and maybe 90% of the Pākehā who don't know about this, wouldn't have been brave enough, or wouldn't have felt comfortable going to that space to see it. Whereas in fact they would have benefited from it as well. Do you think it restricted the sort of audience you got?

Lilicherie: I think it definitely did. Initially for the first few nights only 5 people came and people said they are not used to coming out to *Ngā Hau E Whā* to a performance, it was only the second time there was a performance there. But once word got out, we had full houses. Māori people came, people came from Waikato, Brazil, Canada, South Africa, Germany, Australia came and said, 'you must bring it to our country'. And I had thought it was quite localised here, but people who did not even speak very much English still said you must bring it, so I was blown away by that. I think Mervyn originally did it in more traditional theatre spaces for a predominantly Pākehā audience. This production served a different purpose. Some people were brave enough and felt safe enough. Jim Moriarty when he talked about Marae Theatre as a concept, that he thought it was a good thing to encourage Pākehā, who had no reason to go onto the marae, it gave them a reason to come. There was a warm welcome onto the marae, and offered a possibility to share Māori culture and he hoped that if there was more understanding of the culture this would lead to more support for Māori issues. I thought that was a really good kaupapa, a good idea to go with, I think that he was right and for a lot of people it was the first time they had been on a marae and it was very emotional.

Theatre is action, performed, we often ask can theatre make change in the world. This has not been proved, but it can make changes in our lives, in the lives of those who make it, it in effect becomes a way of life, as Grotowski maintained, 'a way of life is a way to life'. The self discipline, the collaboration, the politics, the giving, and it can also make change in the lives of individuals who witness it. But, there is a responsibility

underlying what we give, as Boal discovered, to perform encouraging people to take up arms and resist their oppressors is different from actually picking up the gun and joining the ranks oneself. He realised the responsibility of engendering action in people, that it should not be,

‘do what I say, not what I do!’

You cannot choose ideas in the hope that they will change you.

You must choose conditions of life and work

(Barba in Bharucha 1990: 67).

*Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou
Struggle Without End*

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GLOSSARY

ahi kā:	burning fires, occupation rights
aroha:	love, sympathise, warmth
atua:	god
awa	river
haere mai!:	welcome, come here
haka:	shouted posture dance
hākari:	feast
hāngi	food from earth oven
hapū:	sub-tribe, pregnant, extended family group
hikoi:	journey
hongī:	pressed noses, traditional greeting, join breathes
hui:	meeting, gathering
ihi:	power, essential force, shudder, excitement
ihiihi:	dread power, exciting feeling
iwi:	tribe, race
kaitiaki:	guardian, caretaker
kanohi ki te kanohi:	literally face to face. The best way to communicate with Māori by a personal visit.
kāore	not, but (to express surprise)
karakia:	incantations, rapidly intoned, up to 300 syllables per minute
karanga:	marae calls by women, ending in a long drawn out descending
kaumātua:	elder
kaupapa:	purpose or reason.
kauri:	native hard wood tree
kawa:	protocol
kāwanatanga:	governor, government
kete:	basket, kit
kōauau:	flute, wood or bone
koha:	gift, donation
kōhanga reo:	kindergarten
kōrero:	speech
korowai:	cloak, chiefly mantle
kowhai:	native tree with yellow flowers
kuia:	old Māori woman
mana:	prestige, authority, status
manuhiri:	visitor, guest
mānuka:	native tree of Aotearoa New Zealand

marae:	meeting place of whānau, central area of village
marae ātea:	the space directly in front of the meeting house
maunga:	mountain
mihimihi:	greetings
mokopuna:	grandchild, young generation
Nga Tahu:	South Island tribe
paepae:	orators' bench on the marae ātea
Pākehā:	European, white skinned
pao:	topical songs, verses in couplets.
Papatuanuku:	The Earth Mother
patu:	weapon
pōhutukawa:	native tree with red flowers
poi:	dance songs using poi balls as accompaniment, quick tempo, additive metre and divisive beat of the poi
poroporoaki:	farewell, closing ceremony
pōwhiri:	welcome ceremony
pukana:	dilating the eyes, performed by both sexes to gesticulate with fierce facial expression and protruding tongue.
putatara:	conch shell as instrument
rākau:	stick.
Rangatira:	leader
rangatiratanga:	self-determination
raupatu:	seize or confiscate land
reo:	language
runanga:	Māori tribal organization
taha Māori:	the Māori perspective or viewpoint
taiaha:	long club, spear, weapon
taki rua:	traditional weaving pattern that goes by twos
tangata:	people
tangata whenua:	people of the land, locals, first people
tangihana:	funeral, ceremony of farewell to the dead
taonga:	treasure
taonga puoro:	treasured musical instruments
tauiwi:	non-Māori
tautoko:	to support
Te Ao Māori:	Māori world view
Te Tiriti:	The Treaty of Waitangi
Te Wai Pounamu	South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand
tikanga:	protocol
tino rangatiratanga:	self determination, sovereignty

tipuna:	ancestor
Toi Whakaari:	The New Zealand Drama School
tokotoko:	carved walking stick
tūpuna:	ancestors
tūrangawaewae:	home turf
urupa:	burial ground
wahine:	woman
waiata:	mostly laments and love songs, with leader drags between
waiata poi:	see poi
Wai Taha:	South Island tribe
wairua:	spirit
waka:	canoe
wānanga:	discussion, learning, seminar
wero:	challenge
whakapapa:	genealogy
whai korero:	speech-making
whānau:	family
whanaungatanga	kinship
whare	house
whare kai:	dining room
whare nui:	large meeting house
whare wānanga:	house of learning
whētero:	tongue extended in performance
wiri:	trembling hands

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Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

APPENDIX I

Māori philosophy

Manawhenua: Whoever now owns the land, the mauri, its spiritual essence, was never extinguished nor alienated, nor can it be. The Maori interest in the land must be understood in Maori terms ... The essence of the land was not material but was in the mauri, the metaphysical life force derived from land as part of the physical body of Papa-tu-a-nuku, the primal earth mother. This should be protected at all times, as you would the real body of a real person.

Manawairua: Spiritual concerns apply to all things ... Matters of the wairua are deeply and personally cultural; do not intrude upon them ... But to inflict my non-religious attitudes on Maori commits the same error as the early Christian missionaries did when they denied the validity of Maori belief.

Mana Motuhake: The independence and sense of sovereignty of the iwi is of paramount concern. Status is always acknowledged by humility, deference and respect ... rangatiratanga is the exercise of authority in the service of Mana Motuhake, the collective mana of the whole tribe. Had the latter term been used in the Treaty there might have been less confusion. But then, if it had been used, no one would ever have agreed to sign their mana away to anyone else, not in any circumstances.

Manatangata: Every individual deserves respect. Each person has the quality of personal mana ... Those who sometimes wish to characterise Maori values as primarily collective violate this principle ... Manatangata is individuality and identity.

Rangatiratanga: Maori society is hierarchically organised, and so is the authority within it ... Before there was ever a Treaty, the rangatira of the tribes established their own rules of conduct and discourse. Everything flowed from this principle: generosity, pride, law and order, respect for individuals, respect for systems. There is nothing comparable in the world of Pakeha action or understanding, though that does not mean that Pakeha cannot understand it.

Kaitiaki: Guardianship rests upon individuals on behalf of tribes. It is an historic duty placed upon the living by the tupuna in the interests of future generations. For every resource, for every treasured place or body of knowledge, there are kaitiaki. ... The concept is very precise. There is a particular person, family or sub-tribe with kaitiaki responsibilities for every feature or resource.

Kotahitanga: The ideal of Maori political process is achieved through consensual discussion. By this everyone is brought together, all personal differences of opinion are aired and, even if they cannot all be incorporated in the final decision, given respect ... It is a central, organising value. The search for unity is deeply important in a society where it is not easily found,

Putahi: Everything is connected to everything else in the Maori view of the world. Always put particular matters into the context of the whole ... Sometimes this means that discussion seems to go off on a tangent and Westerners get a bad case of agenda anxiety.

Putā noa: Seek rest and contentment. When things are done correctly, according to nga tikanga, the rules of custom, there is a sense of closure, of completeness.

Manaakitanga: In everything you do care for the people. First, and last, the concerns of the whanau or the hapu, the tribe or Maori people generally, must be put before anything else.

Te Ao Tawhito – Te Ao Marama: Prescriptions for the future were written in the beginning. Cross-cultural differences in attitudes towards time are a familiar topic ... The old people hold the words of the ancestors dear. Their wisdom is a vital consideration. That is one reason why consultation with kaumatua, both koroua and kuia, is so important. They are the best interpreters because they regard new knowledge as a manifestation of old knowledge reborn into the eternal present. ... Pakeha ... cannot cross this cultural gulf. They're not your ancestors, and your attitudes towards the past and future are culturally so different. Respect for parallel process is the only answer to this dilemma.

Te Hara: The infliction of Western cultural values on the people has done enormous damage to their cultural integration. Never forget the harm that has resulted ... I do not feel personal guilt over the sins, the hara, committed by white people against Maori interests. I did not personally cause the pain ... But everyone working in the Maori world has to sort out where they stand on the reparation issue. Raupatu, the confiscation of land, was a massive insult as well as an intolerably stupid act of disruption ... We have not fulfilled the Treaty guarantees of equal rights to all citizens, believing that equality of opportunity was all that was required.

Te Ohaki: Deal with the dreams of the people with the utmost generosity that it is within your power to manage or control. Generosity is an attribute of manaakitanga and as such is expected ... Maori people treated those first arrivals as manuhiri, as guests to whom goodwill and support must be

extended. Our ancestors wanted more. It is time to remember with generosity where it all began.

Whakakitenga: Never presume to understand. There is always more to know. If you wish to avoid being foolish, you may have to play the fool and seek enlightenment. I have at times asked questions so basic that only an idiot would not know the answer ... For some strange reason Pakeha people seem to think that there is a finite body of knowledge which, once they have worked it over, will provide all they need to know ... Like any other, Maori culture is always adapting and changing, but only partly because of outsiders and more because the people have changed their lives themselves.

He Kai Tautoko: everybody needs a guide. Nowadays, I will rarely go into a Maori situation without someone who can be my mentor and guide ... Again, I need a Maori person at my side to monitor my actions and statements. I also need an interpreter, because my fluency in the language is not adequate.

Te Mutunga: These principles are powerful statements of a personal ethos ... They do not derive entirely from the ethical guidelines of my own cultural heritage, nor from that of Maori. They are tools of the cultural interface ... They constitute an essentially New Zealand bicultural awareness (Ritchie: 52-65).

This is a long list, and I include it as a guide for readers to interpret the processes and relationships that developed in the making of my production of *Songs to the Judges*.

APPENDIX II

Free Theatre Incorporated

The 1998 production of *Songs to the Judges* was under the umbrella of 'Free Theatre Incorporated', Christchurch. The Free Theatre guidelines for production proposals state,

Free Theatre was established in 1982 as an incorporated society with its own theatre in the Arts Centre. Its original mission statement included the following objectives: to stage old and new rarely staged European plays in original translations, new New Zealand plays, and classical English texts in an unusual experimental style. From the start the emphasis has been on non-verbal action and high production standards, discouraging the star system and encouraging long rehearsal and training periods in a company context.

APPENDIX III

ACTOR RESPONSE

In June 1998 before we travelled to Hamilton I gave the actors a question sheet to fill in about their experiences of rehearsing and performing in *Songs to the Judges*.

Although only two of the actors responded they did so in depth and I include their responses in full. Sections of this material could have been intercut into the main thesis, however, I believe the responses have an inner power when read as a whole.

Lilicherie: I am writing a paper for the ADSA conference and as I write I make assumptions from my perspective as director, but many of these questions I need to ask you, the actors, what you think, how it worked for you, and if you have changed in any way before to after the whole process of rehearsal and performance? Was it worth it? Anything that you would like to share would be most appreciated, and could be included in the paper if you don't mind. i.e. do you want to have a voice in this paper I write – as it seems to me you should, as the whole process I hope has been one of collaboration. Questions:

- 1 What have been some of your memorable experiences rehearsing and performing in *Songs to the Judges*?
- 2 What have you learnt from the experience? Historically? Professionally?
- 3 As a bi-cultural production, was this different in any way from a play with less emphasis on culture?
- 4 In relation to the above question, what part did the content play? In the enacting of crisis points in history? In the violence entailed? And in the racism? How did you cope? The inclusion of Rai Rakatau as kaumatua? What difference did this make? About exchange between cultures? Between actors and their skills?

Te Mihinga Komene

What has the play done for you as an actor?

- Being told that I could sing as I've never really been a strong singer – although the rest of my family are
- Getting to work with people I didn't know before
- Having to take the lead in the Māori role by using all my experiences and having to place it somewhere in the play
- Meeting new people
- All Māori aspects
- Singing training
- Realising how far I've come in my training in theatre, Māori tikanga, performance.

What have you learnt?

- That the message still needs to be talked about
- Educating the rangatahi kaumatua
- Learnt the difference between cultures; Māori have their tikanga and values
- The play requires a lot of energy, focus, seriousness
- It's easy to fall apart without a full cast during rehearsals – ensemble
- I've been lucky that I can speak te reo and understand tikanga
- I have more to learn about my history
- I find it hard to trust people, it takes me longer, I usually stand back for a while and only speak when I have something worth saying. I try and work it out first
- You need to put actions to your words, thoughts, ideas. Workshopping, improvisation
- I think from an audience's perspective you would watch the play and try and decide which part of the play is relevant to you, does it affect you in any way? What are you going to do about it? Are you supposed to feel guilty?
- The play was different in the way that it empathises with the Māori, it's a pisstake of all the Pākehā laws, colonisation, etc.
- The content made you listen, think twice about what's being said
- I feel I haven't done enough research about the historical events, so still just going on what others have told me what happened. But I feel angered as well. How could such a people believe they're doing the right thing?

- I was surprised by the amount of Pākehā audience that came and were so moved by the play
- The play's tension gets to a point where all you can remember, have ringing in your ears all the screaming and loud singing. It hits a really high point and all this power and tension just lashes out.
- All the singing training has been really valuable, really appreciated Andy's teaching of music, his time for us
- I didn't learn anything new from the Pākehā culture itself because everything that is said in the play we practically face everyday; Māori are Pākehā and Māori, we practice both cultures everyday, it is not new.
- All my previous experiences in productions are familiar with what I've done, - a lot of sharing, whanaungatanga.
- I still feel I haven't really reached where I want to be in the play. Something is still missing, maybe it will happen up North. There's still a lot more that needs to be taught, said, faced.

How did you cope with your own racism in the rehearsal process?

How did you not cope with it?

- At first I felt I had nothing to really go by, nothing to feed off. I felt that because I'm Māori I'm supposed to know everything.
- Well, I begin and in the end the play, makes it all complete. I felt that the pākehā actors really had no idea how Māori live or any familiarities with our tikanga at all, never been exposed to it, so a lot of kōrero was needed, understanding us.
- I found that it was hard to take away someone's culture. I usually go for the under-represented, look for what's not right. It didn't feel right, going against what I didn't believe in my heart.
- Kāore (not, but), because it doesn't feel right. My culture is too strong to understand the Pākehā values, etc. They all seem too worthless to me.
- The play would seem useless.
- I felt it hard to cope with at times because I didn't know him or his experiences, history, etc and didn't believe in his Christian values. The Pākehā would

believe everything he said. It's hard when you don't feel really comfortable with what's being placed on you.

- It always seemed that because the Māori actors came in mid-way during the rehearsals, we were always being put to work around what has already been worked out. We missed out a lot in the workshopping of scenes. This made the play hard to understand. Didn't really know what was needed of us.

Criticisms from Audience

- I seem to play quite an angry role – where does all the anger come from?
- You weren't just acting were you?
- How is the play relevant today?
- Man, you go hard out don't you!

Myfanwy Moore

What have been some of your memorable experiences rehearsing and performing in Songs to the Judges?

The difference of the four Māori actors. I mean they really do behave a lot differently to us, the way they work. They laugh and talk a lot more. That was hard and still is hard to deal with when you've been taught to see theatre as a discipline ... But, because of this laughing and playing around, friendly bantering Songs is a nice place to go, work gets done in a round-about way, but it does get done and things (mostly) seem to flow much better, rather than trying REALLY HARD all the time and getting all screwed up inside. You care about the play because of the people. I couldn't say that any one person gave more (or less) than another.

What have you learnt from the experience? Historically? Professionally?

Historically I have been filled in on NZ history which I had somehow not paid attention to or missed because I had been sheltered from – I refer here to the 1980 Springboks tour. I lived in the provinces. Mum says people didn't get so excited about it as the places where the games were actually played. I guess NZ history has become something that I can view as being something – actions in the past – that don't have much to do with me, as a white female in the 90's. It's more real and less something that happened to someone else a long time ago.

Personally, tough. Probably find repercussions for years to come. I went into the play hoping to de-programme some of the prejudice towards Māori I had noticed was second nature to me. That Māori were lazy, etc... were something I often held to be true. What I mean is when I looked at a Māori a negative resume flashed up from somewhere in my subconscious. But instead of being able to free myself from this I had to embrace this aspect of my psyche as it is the part of myself that is /are the characters I portray in the play. By making it larger than life I can see it for what it is though, where it comes from – unfortunately social conditioning. It's scary to think that the majority of white NZer's view Māori as second class citizens – as a whole – not as individuals capable of being “good” or “bad” just as any person is. Brent, Juanita, Potaua, Te Mihinga were all very reticent to begin with – they are much better at expressing their feelings and thoughts with this second rehearsal period. That's cool to hear them speak out, because they stood back for so long. We enforced our way of rehearsing on them, because we started the rehearsals before they came, things might have been different if they'd been there from the start. And when B, J, Te, P didn't speak up I guess us white fella's just got used to jumping in. I have felt much better about having a voice in this project partly because the director – Cherie encouraged, also because in that room I suddenly had the most (or was one of) experience – for theatre. When it came to understanding Māori – Why they are who they are I had some catching up to do. One night Ray said he had felt ashamed to be a Māori and Juanita concurred. I looked at these 2 beautiful people and thought of that extra stigma – weight upon their lives and felt upset. That was an important moment. The words of the songs rang true “How can I have value when no one values me”.

It's a realisation about oppression. You can't go through the experiences of a project like this as a white person and not become aware that you're a member (willing or not) of the oppressing team. When you are part of the dominant race you (I) cannot understand fully what it is to live your life a couple of steps down and more disadvantaged just because of the colour of your skin. And worse still when you know that these people have become the lower class in their own land. But still I have no solutions.

Professionally: Well I learnt a lot about acting – focus, etc. Because of certain people's lack of focus, I was able to see what focus is. (I also admit still that I'm not that great at it). Now identified, I have tried to work on it. Leadership role. Being in charge ain't that fun but it's cool because sometimes I use it as a chance to practice making my voice bigger. I mean leadership only in terms of warm-ups because in each members own way they take on the role at some time or other. Potaua has much

knowledge of his people's taonga, I think he has a lot of mana but he wears it like his skin. He doesn't need to make a show of it (I saw that when I had my missionary turn at converting him). I think that in terms of my job – technician it would be great to be taken seriously without demanding it. I saw alternative models of ways of being.

As a bi-cultural production, was this different in any way from a play with less emphasis on culture?

For sure! As for the reasons I talked about in question 1. In a play you may have your person who plays the role that Jaron has taken on – the one who always needs pulling into line – but here B,J,P, Te had to be met in the middle; they needed to recognise the discipline of theatre and we needed to realise that not all people will adhere to any specific regimes. Well we never really got one – this time round is better. [second rehearsal period]. The fact that this play is ABOUT NZ the place I live in, the stuff that has made it the way it is makes this the most “up to the minute” (even though it's 14 years old) play I've been in. It says something that still needs to be said here! That the past can't be erased. Annihilation – assimilation are not options. These issues must be addressed and re-addressed.

In relation to the above question, what part did the content play? In the enacting of crisis points in history? In the violence entailed? And in the racism? How did you cope? The inclusion of Rai Rakatau as kaumatua? What difference did this make? About exchange between cultures? Between actors and their skills?

Argh big question: The text specifically illuminates what racist bastards white people as a force have been. – Obviously specific to this country in the last 150+ years. You can't get plainer than “We think you ought to die”. I always found it hard to stare at J or Te with hatred shining in my eyes. In the moment I always want to give them a wink to say it's not me. It always feels like the Māori get to act out their convictions – to feel the transgressions of their people as we act out these crisis points in history. I'm always acting against a resistance – an urge ‘to not be the oppressive’ white guy. I think Jono counteracts this with his joking around, talking with a ‘homie’ accent and recalling his Otara roots. “I'm one of you” he seems to say. Well I'm not. But I don't want to be the oppressor. I guess that's the suck thing about the play: that it magnifies small oppressive activities – like trying to speak for J, P,B, Te in rehearsal ... we say it because they're not piping up, but perhaps that's because they need room, time to express themselves. Time seems to be a big difference between the races. Māori take time – cook their food slowly, welcome people with time. We're obsessed with how

quickly things can get done, 2 minute noodles and Hi (Hello isn't a very long word but still we manage to shorten it!)

It wasn't until Patu (documentary) that I saw the violence. Then it had more meaning. I'm afraid to say the violence, to me, seems strange. I always felt strange beating Potaua up. Like it wasn't quite right. When we blocked it he wanted to be the one to do down – I guess he didn't want to be a girl beater. The violence isn't real to me. Fighting starts when all the screaming words have been done with: perhaps "it is" coming then. The play shows that no solution has been found – we don't even end with hope really, maybe that violence we show will become a reality again. I'm still thinking about the play – how to be in it. To cope with the racism and violence I have to think of it as a game – play acting – keeping a core inside which always says "that's not me". I think once I can let go of that and become really dispicable then I'll have unleashed a fully comprehensive role/facist. I think ... The content – I say again the words in the "white" songs are ones I have heard my family say – they're not fabricated but come from white NZers.

The last run through really showed that to me – with the question [about violence] in my head and the forcefulness of J,B,P & TeM I was truly scared and shocked on Tuesday night. It asks/shows is that (violence) what we really want? When the words have all been spoken – compromises been made is that all we people can come up with in the end?

English Version of the Treaty's three articles

Article the first

The Chiefs of the Confederation of the United Tribes of New Zealand and the separate and independent Chiefs who have not become members of the Confederation cede to Her Majesty the Queen of England absolutely and without reservation all the rights and powers of Sovereignty which the said Confederation or Individual Chiefs respectively exercise or possess, or may be supposed to exercise or to possess over their respective Territories as the sole sovereigns thereof.

Article the second

Her Majesty the Queen of England confirms and guarantees to the Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and to the respective families and individuals thereof the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession; but the Chiefs of the United Tribes and the individual Chiefs yield to Her Majesty the exclusive right of Pre-emption over such lands as the proprietors thereof may be disposed to alienate at such prices as may be agreed upon between the respective Proprietors and persons appointed by Her Majesty to treat with them in that behalf.

Article the third

In consideration thereof Her Majesty the Queen of England extends to the Natives of New Zealand Her royal protection and imparts to them all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects.

Maori Version of the three articles

Ko te tuatahi

Ko nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga me nga Rangatira katoa hoki ki hai i uru ki taua wakaminenga ka tuku rawa atu ki te Kuini o Ingarangi ake tonu atu te Kawanatanga katoa o o ratou wenua.

Ko te tuarua

Ko te Kuini o Ingarangi ka wakarite ka wakaae ki nga Rangatira ki nga hapu ki nga tangata katoa o Nu Tirani te tino Rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa. Otia ko nga Rangatira o te wakaminenga me nga Rangatira katoa atu ka tuku ki te Kuini te hokonga o era wahi wenua e pai ai te tangata nona te wenua – ki te ritenga o te utu e wakaritea ai e ratou ko te kai hoko e meatia nei e te Kuini hei kai hoko mona.

Ko te tuatoru

Hei wakaritenga mai hoki tenei mo te wakaactanga ki te Kawanatanga o te Kuini – Ka tiakina e te Kuini o Ingarangi nga tangata maori katoa o Nu Tirani ka tukua ki a ratou nga tikanga katoa rite tahi ki ana mea ki nga tangata o Ingarangi.

Te Whanau
 Rai Rakatau - Ngati Hau Kaumatua
 Robin Bond
 Anastasia Dailianis
 Jaron Hart
 Myfanwy Moore
 Jonno Roberts
 Brent Hemi - Ngati Kuia, Ngati Tuwharetoa
 Juanita Hepi - Nga Puhi, Ngai Tahu
 Te Mihinga Komene - Nga Puhi, Waikato/Maniapoto
 (Ngati Hikairo, Ngati Apakura), Ngati Porou
 Potaua Tule - Ngati Pikiao (Te Arawa),
 Ngati Rere (Ngai Tuuhoe)

Cherie Hart	Director
Andy Thompson	Musical Director/Guitar
Myfanwy Moore	Technical Director
Stephanie Watts	Lighting Operator
David Oxenbridge	Stage Manager
Simon Roberts	Slide Projection
Julianne Eason	Documentary Director
Georgina Hart	Photography
Grace Voller	Poster Design

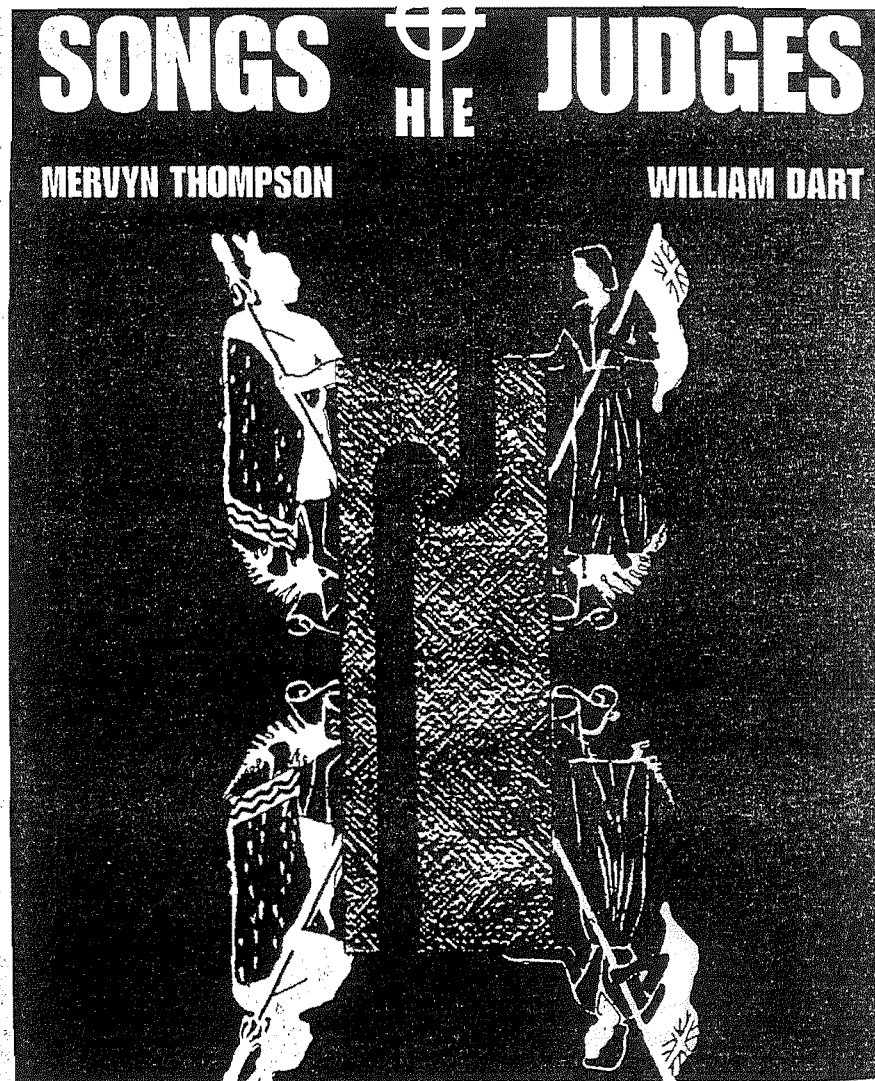
The director wishes here to remember the generous support given to her from Max Hailstone, who is sadly missed. Kia ora Max.

Thanks to:

Martha King-Tamihana, George Kahi, David Brennan, Kressy, Patricia Wallace, Aroha Rangi, Mary Hart, Adrienne Rakatau, Te Miringa Hohaia, Jim Moriarty, Mark McEntyre, Mike Loose, Richard Nunns, David Fahy, Tihi Pounaki, Shirley and Donald Washbourne, Peter Falkenberg, Sharon Mazer, Te Rita Papesch, Godfrey Sim, Peter Moeau, Mark Houlahan, Bryan Potiki, Awatea Edwin, Vicki Buck, Jenny May, Grace Hoet, Cristian Pilditch, Hone Kouka, Elizabeth Woods, Gavin Britt, Roma Potiki, Megan, Mereanna Pitman, Madeline McNamara, Lorrae Parry, Hori Rahui, John McDavitt, Jon Hart, Andrew Alston, Lois McNaught, Cameron Mattox, Rhys Darby, Rosie Carnahan, Portobello, Kiwi Disposals, Cosmic Corner, The Green Room, The Dept of Theatre and Film - University of Canterbury, and to everyone else who has supported this production of *Songs to the Judges*.

The whanau of *Songs to the Judges* wish to express their special thanks to Nga Hau E Wha National Marae for welcoming this production and for supporting the kaupapa of Marae Theatre and making it possible, kia ora.

Nau Mai, Haeremai, Haeremai, Haeremai



a Free Theatre production

4 - 18 April : 8pm

BOOKINGS: 364 2987 ext 7286

250 Pages Road - Nga Hau E Wha National Marae

Nga Waiata

1. Ahi Kaa

"Land is the very soul of a tribal people... The traditional means of gaining tribal land (take taunaha, ruupuna, raupatu, tuku) had to be made effective by 'ahi kaa' (burning fires)."

2. The Law Song

Lists various Land Acts from 1841 - 1967.

3. Payment

"The objects bartered for land haunt the imagination like relics of lost innocence."

4. We Think You Ought to Die

"Quotation from a 19th Century article in the New Plymouth Times."

5. Till You Came Along

"When the European brought Christianity to the Maori he brought a dubious gift. With it came modern warfare and the intricacies of European Law."

6. We Got it all Together Just For You

"The story of Te Whiti and his policy of non-violent resistance is told in Dick Scott's book *Ask That Mountain*. In protest against the land-grabbing that was taking place in the Taranaki area, Te Whiti sent out tribesmen to plough up settler land. Laws were passed to hold Maori prisoners for up to two years without trial."

7. Gather Up The Earth

"Many of the words of this song are taken practically verbatim from the sayings of Te Whiti. It is about death which occurs in non-violent but passionate protest."

8. Matakite Land March

"This is a Maori rendering of Thomas Bracken's *Not Understood* used on the famous Maori Land March to Wellington in 1975. I am grateful to Thomas Cooper for permission to use it; and trust that he and other Maori people will feel that it has been used with due respect."

9. The Raglan Golf Course Dispute

"Seventeen defendants, led by Eva Rickard, appeared in the Magistrate's Court in Hamilton on a charge of wilful trespass. They were in fact laying claim to their own land by holding a church service on what they considered to be their 'urupa' or burial ground - which happened to be the 15th green of the golf course. When asked to testify in court they sang the hymn 'Tama Ngakau Marie'. The Court's decision to grant them ownership of their own land, yet not allow them to use it, caused much indignation in the Maori community."

10. Once in a Generation

"The song ranges over a hundred years of legal and military suppression, the two working hand-in-glove."

11. A New Kind of Song

"The lack of understanding with which many Pakehas have responded to the new political awareness now being shown by the urban Maori is staggering. Our song reflects that particular brand of unawareness which would prefer the Maori to be a kind of picturesque eccentric - brought out only on Ceremonial Occasions. On such nostalgia the tourist industry has always thrived."

12. Three Times More Likely

"One of the reasons many Maori are singing a new kind of song is seen in our crime statistics. Most of the people who get caught and convicted are those who feel themselves to have no stake in obeying the rules of society as they now stand. ... The growing poverty and unemployment in our land hits the young urban Maori first and hardest."

13. Marlene

"This song is based on a meeting I had with a Maori girl at Bollard Girls' Home. She told her tale with an eloquence far beyond that of many more sophisticated people. Marlene was as much in touch with her feelings as any person I have ever met."

14. Scales of Justice

"Perhaps the impersonality of the law, revealed in this song, is less objectionable than the bouts of heavy moralism in which our judges too often indulge."

15. I Spit On Your Court

"This song is based on an incident involving a Maori radical, Mangu Awarau, in an Auckland court. The defendant refused to accept the jurisdiction of a European-style court as binding. He was charged with contempt."

16. The Judge's Reply

"The Judge's gentle tenor tones are suspect - he protests his humanity too much and there is just a suspicion that he sees himself as some sort of misunderstood Christ figure ..."

17. It's Coming

"The events of the past five years have made the possibility of violent racial strife in New Zealand frighteningly real. ... A divisive feeling has grown in the land, and it involves not only division by race but also a deep sense of separation, alienation and grievance among New Zealanders of every social hue. Mutually hostile groups seem to rise up behind the social barricades every hour."

18. Point of No Return

The 'brown beer bottle' line refers to the incident in Parliament's Beehive when a supporter of the theatre group Maranga Mai threw a bottle against the wall - as a warning to the government to heed the message their play contained.

19. On That Day

"Our songplay ends with a vision of justice and unity. Many of the words come from Te Whiti's prophetic advice to his tribespeople ... As I wrote the lyrics for this song I was reminded not only of Te Whiti but also of Martin Luther King: 'I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope ... With this faith we shall be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day'"

Mervyn Thompson 1980

Koo tee Rangī, mee tee Whenua - ee pahemo. Koo tee Kupu - mau toomu.